

**CONTENT AND CONTEXT OF EVANGELIZATION
AN HISPANIC PERSPECTIVE**

**A Professional Project
Presented to
the Faculty of the School of Theology
at Claremont**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry**

**by
Ariel Zambrano
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This professional project, completed by

Ariel Zambrano

*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Faculty Committee

C. Dean Freshbarger

Stan W. Rhodes

April 2, 1986
Date

Joseph C. Hough
Dean

In memory of

Rev. Spolinar Zambrano y R.

In gratitude to

Rev. Hermelinda M. de Zambrano

Parents, colleagues, friends.

A word of gratitude is due to my wife Mary Fitzpatrick Zambrano, who painstakingly edited my manuscript. She read every page several times and made very valuable suggestions for the improvement of its style. My daughter, Lucy Zambrano, efficient with computers, made all the corrections necessary in the manuscript patiently, efficiently and with love. My two sons gave me all the support they could, John, with encouraging words and inquiries, and Mario, spending long periods of time sitting by me while I was working on the computer. In many ways this project is the result of family work and, even more, of family love. I recognize that without their help and support this thesis would have taken longer to be finished and its quality would be much less. Even so, the end product is the sole responsibility of the signatory.

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Friends always show their love. What are brothers for if not to share trouble?

Proverbs 17: 17.

Ariel Zambrano

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ABSTRACT

The demographic phenomenon of our times is the outstanding growth of the Hispanic population in the U.S.A. It is estimated that by the year 2000, in just fourteen more years, there will be 30 to 35 million Hispanics in this country. One of the areas where Hispanics are growing fastest is Southern California, the area served by the California-Pacific Conference. Surprisingly, this phenomenal growth is not reflected in this Conference, where the number of Hispanic churches and membership has been steadily declining while other denominations experience growth in the number of Hispanics in their ranks. Why are they growing? Why are we declining?

This study is centered in the California-Pacific Conference and uses a three-pronged approach: 1. **Historical**. Presenting the background of the Hispanic people in Southern California, a review of the Hispanic Mission, the Provisional Conference, and Integration. 2. **Demographics**. Some statistics are examined along with a few case histories. 3. **Interviews**. Three experts on Hispanic work and evangelism in Southern California were interviewed.

Three basic solutions to the problem are offered: The **Basic Christian Communities** are suggested as an example. The work of **Adelante** is offered as a possible means to reach Hispanics, and the organization of an **Hispanic District** within the California-Pacific Conference is stressed.

Such are the problem, the approach, and the solution offered in this project. How these ideas were developed will be discovered by the patient reader in the pages that follow.

PROSAPIA AZTECA

Yo soy de aquella raza de púgiles arqueros
Que, vestidos de pieles lustrosas de *ocelotl*,
Si con *Ilhuicamina* flecharon los luceros,
Con el de *Tilantongo* derrotaron al sol.

Mi prosapia es de príncipes poetas y guerreros,
Aguiles cuando oían el son del caracol,
Zenzontles que rimaban sus cantos lastimeros
En la lira de bronce de *Netzahualcoyotl*.

En mí alientan los ímpetus y anhelos ancestrales
De la Raza dormida. Soy flechador de ideales.
Sobre mi frente el cielo dilata su tisú.

Y yo en un gesto altivo de guerrero y poeta,
Tiendo el arco potente y enclavo mi saeta
En el flameante escudo del rojo *Tonatiuh*.

Gonzalo Báez-Camargo

NOTAS:

Ocelotl: Nombre del tigre, en idioma azteca.

Ilhuicamina: Nombre de uno de los emperadores aztecas, que significa "flechador del cielo."

El de Tilantongo: El arquero de Tilantongo, nombre de una región del actual estado de Oaxaca, México, fué, según la leyenda, un poderoso guerrero que llegó al valle de Oaxaca, del cual, según las tradiciones, era dueño y señor el propio Sol. El guerrero de Tilantongo desafió, entonces, al Sol a singular batalla para disputarse aquel señorío. Era en la tarde y el Sol tocaba ya con su disco el horizonte, próximo a su ocaso. El guerrero, pronunciado su desafío, apuntó al Sol y le disparó una flecha. En ese momento, el astro se hundía tras los montes, con lo cual el guerrero de Tilantongo se dió a sí mismo por vencedor y tomó posesión de la tierra.

Caracol: Los antiguos indios mexicanos usaban caracoles como trompetas de guerra.

Zenzontle: Ave canora, nativa de América, rival del ruiseñor.

Netzahualcoyotl: Rey poeta del señorío indio de Texcoco.

Tonatiuh: Nombre que los aztecas daban al sol.

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

The number of Hispanics in the United Methodist churches decreases while the number of Hispanics in Southern California increases day by day. While the United Methodist Church is losing members, particularly Hispanics, other churches like the Baptist and Assemblies of God, are gaining members and establishing new Hispanic churches in the area covered by the California-Pacific Annual Conference.

There should be a way of overcoming this trend. If the membership of the United Methodist Church is steadily declining one way to arrest it would be to reach the thousands of Hispanics that arrive to this area every year.

Thesis

The thesis of the present writer is that if the Hispanics are to be reached for Christ, it has to be done in a very **intentional** way, taking into consideration their culture and their present situation. This is the reason for the title of the present dissertation: Text and Context of Evangelization: An Hispanic Perspective. In the California-Pacific Conference there are frequent references to the pluralism and the richness of its ethnic heritage, but so far, the present writer has not been able to discover any decisive, intentional, daring effort to reach the Hispanics in the midst of the Conference. To reach them for Christ and the church will require taking bold and intentional action.

Hispanic

In this dissertation the term *Hispanic* is the preferred appellation to refer to those people who live in the United States of America and whose language and/ or culture is Spanish. Other terms have been used, like Mexicans, but there are thousands who were born in this country who did not come from Mexico; for the same reason the term Mexican-American seems inadequate. The term Latin American has been used also, but this term includes also other peoples in Latin America that speak other languages than Spanish; the same objection is made to the term Latins. During the sixties the term Chicano was used to refer to those of Mexican origin who had been born in this country. For one thing the name is not very popular in our days and obviously leaves out a great number of persons not of Mexican origin. In this study the term *Hispanic* is preferred because it is inclusive enough and exclusive enough, which helps to establish the perimeters of the present reflexions. It is inclusive enough because it establishes the common origin of the people in Latin America that have their cultural roots in Spain and leaves out the peoples who have their cultural roots in other countries, like Portugal, England, France, and others. The present writer is not implying that these peoples should not be reached for Christ, but he is using the term as a pragmatic device to determine the field under scrutiny.

Previous Works

As far as the present writer can determine, no previous work has studied ways to evangelize the Hispanics in the area covered by the present California-Pacific Conference, and no study has been made presenting the importance of the history and culture of the Hispanic people as a legitimate and essential starting point for their evangelization. There is a great number of books on the general subject of evangelization but most of them leave out the important aspect of the culture of the people.

There are three books known by the present writer that deal specifically with the cultural aspect of evangelization: The Religious Dimension in Hispanic Los Angeles, by Clifton L. Holland; Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorn, eds.; Christianity in Culture, by Charles H. Kraft. Also there are two dissertations that bear on the subject of Hispanics, but without considering the aspect of their culture or their evangelization. They deal with the demographic and historical aspect: A Study of the Spanish-Speaking Protestant Church and Her Mission to the Mexican-American Minority, by Elías Gabriel Geiván; The History and Prospects of Hispanic Methodism in the Southern California Conference of the United Methodist Church, by José Moreno Fernández. These two dissertations were presented to the Faculty of the School of Theology at Claremont and both of them have been helpful to the writer of the present inquiry.

Scope and Limitations of the Work

The Hispanic population is growing all over the nation and in each area it acquires some peculiarities that should be taken into consideration as an important cultural context in that particular area. The present study will concentrate on the area of the California-Pacific Annual Conference. Probably some of the findings and methods described in this study could be applicable to other sections and conferences in the United States, but the present writer is an Hispanic member of the California-Pacific Conference, about which he is more knowledgeable.

The Trail to Follow

The argument will be developed as follows: In Chapter I an attempt is made to describe the cultural heritage of Hispanics in America beginning with their heritage from Spain, and from the Moors who invaded Spain and left their mark so indelibly imprinted on the Spanish soul. The chapter ends with a consideration of "the Spanish Christ."

In Chapter II reference is made to the Mexican part of the heritage of the Hispanics. Although some Hispanics in United States came from the Caribbean, Central America, or South America, the great majority came and continues to come from Mexico. The Mexican factor is undoubtedly of paramount importance in this cultural amalgam: Spanish-American-Indian. An effort is made to show that the culture that starts in North Africa, goes to Spain, crosses the ocean and fuses with the Indian culture of the Americas. Indeed, a particular emphasis is placed on the Mexican culture. In doing so the figure of the transplant and the graft is used to describe the difference between the Anglo and the Hispanic cultures in America. As Chapter I does, this chapter also ends with a study of Christ, but in this case with a study of "the Creole Christ."

Chapter III examines the presence of the Hispanics in the United States and gives an analysis of their present situation. To this is added a study of Methodist beginnings to reach the Hispanics for Christ. A critique is made of these original efforts.

Chapter IV is a demographic profile of the present Hispanics living in the area under consideration. In the previous chapters a review was made of the history and culture of the Hispanics, now, in this chapter the lens zooms in to the present and the study centers on the actual cultural situation of the Hispanics in the area under scrutiny.

In Chapter V the emphasis is on the "how" of the evangelization of the Hispanics and some suggestions are offered: The Basic Christian Communities, Adelante, and the model of an Hispanic District in the California-Pacific Annual Conference. While the final touches were being given to the present work the present writer learned that LAMAG, the Hispanic caucus of the conference, was thinking along the same lines and was even trying to present a proposal for an Hispanic District within the conference to the coming annual assembly of the conference in June, 1986. An appendix has been added with the LAMAG proposal, even though it has not been approved in its final form.

The dissertation ends with some conclusions and a bibliography.

Chapter I

THE HISPANICS, WHO ARE THEY?

The Starting Point

There is no doubt that Isabel of Castile was a great influence on the formation of modern Spain. When she was born in Madrigal de las Torres, on April 22, 1451, nobody imagined that 18 years later she would marry Fernando of Aragon and that at 23 she would become the Queen of Castile; this in spite of intrigue, confinement and many other means used against her by Henry IV.

This notable couple eventually became los reyes católicos, a title given them by the pope, but only after many difficulties and brushes with failure. Isabel's claim was threatened when a daughter was born to the wife of her half-brother, King Enrique the Impotent. In 1474 Isabel won and became queen. This spirited but dignified woman, with her round face, blue eyes, and red hair, was touched with greatness. Her courage and imagination--and her luck--had much to do with Spanish and American history. Fernando was quite different. To his contemporaries he seemed crafty, calculating, tricky, mendacious, and dishonest. These traits brought him the dubious honor of being praised (or obliquely damned) in an entire chapter of Machiavelli's The Prince. But combined with Isabel's qualities, they helped to bring unparalleled fortune to the royal couple, their heirs, and to Spain.¹

When Isabel and Fernando married they became monarchs of Castile and Aragon, the two bastions of modern Spain, but they did not receive a peaceful kingdom on a silver platter; the glory of Isabel is that from a land impoverished by war, intrigue, envy, and mistrust, she built a kingdom and laid the firm foundations of a nation. She had to fight the nobles that opposed her rule, and the Moors, who still held the Kingdom of Granada in the South, but eventually, between her and her husband, they controlled most of the peninsula, from Leon in the North, to Cadiz in the South, and Valencia in the East. The spot that now had to be conquered was Granada.

¹ John Edwin Fagg, in "The Iberian Background," in Livie Isauro Durán and H. Russell Bernard, eds. Introduction to Chicano Studies, (New York: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 85-86.

Isabel's ingenuity and great tact as a ruler can be seen in an incident that took place when the Grand Master of the Military Order of Santiago was to be appointed. The Queen asked the Pope for authority to make the appointment herself but a noble, Don Alonso de Cárdenas, tried to best the Queen, calling an urgent meeting where he planned to get himself elected. Isabel got wind of this machination and when nobody was expecting her, she entered the room. She suspended the deliberations till the answer from the Pope could arrive. When this happened, it gave the Queen authority to appoint the man she preferred; in a masterful stroke, she appointed Don Alonso. From then on the Grand Order of Santiago was a useful instrument in the hands of Isabel.²

The Moors were in Spain for almost eight centuries, from 711 A.D. to 1492 A.D. It is not possible to explain the soul and character of modern Spain without considering the contributions of the Moors. During these centuries there were battles between Moors and Christians but also military and political alliances. When the Spaniards finally were able to force the intruders out of their land, the Moors had left their mark on the soul of Iberia. It has been affirmed that the fundamental fabric of the Spanish soul is not Celtic or Phoenician, Roman or Gothic, but Iberian, and for this reason, African.

John A. Mackay, who was a great lover of all things Hispanic and an erudite on Latin America, has this to say about the effect of the Moorish invasion of Spain:

The Moorish invasion was followed by eight centuries of defensive struggle during which the Islamic soul of the invader was transmitted to the Christian defender. This made Spain even more African and so it was twice true that Spain was the gift of North Africa to Europe. That is the same area that in the first centuries of the Christian era gave to Europe the great figures of Saint Augustine and Tertullian. Let us beware of despising Africa as mother of races.... The Spaniard has been called the eternal African and through him there was impressed forever on the pampas and mountains of Hispanic America the indelible seal of Africa.³

² Justo L. González, Y Hasta lo Ultimo de la Tierra: Una Historia Ilustrada del Cristianismo (Miami: Caribe, 1980) VII, p. 29.

³ Juan A. Mackay, El Otro Cristo Español (México: Casa Unida de Publicaciones, 1952), pp. 19-20. The translation is by the present writer.

Fernando III (1200-1252) let the Moors establish themselves in the Moorish Kingdom of Granada, in the extreme South of the peninsula, as vassals of Castile, required to pay tribute. But as time went on, while Granada was able to grow and expand, Castile saw herself submerged in anarchy and internal struggle, and the collecting of the tribute was abandoned.

After Fernando and Isabel had consolidated their realm, they thought that the time had arrived to conquer the Kingdom of Granada in order to establish their own kingdom without that thorn that had been in the flesh of Spain for such a long time. From 1481 to 1490 Fernando and Isabel battled the Moors, conquering some villages and cities, without attacking Granada itself. Finally, in 1490 the sovereigns started the siege of Granada which finally fell to the forces of Castile and Aragon on January 2, 1492.⁴

The year 1492 is loaded with meaning for the understanding of the future of Spain and her impact on America. When the standards of Leon and Castile waved atop the Moorish towers of the Alhambra, Spain was finally united. The Christians had defeated the Moors at last, but much of the Moslem spirit had been implanted in the soul of Iberia, especially the fanaticism of the followers of Mohammed. The political unification of the country was to be followed by spiritual unification and political expansion. This was not a conscious decision taken after deliberation by the crown and the nobles, but in retrospect it can be seen that far-reaching actions were taken in this pregnant year of 1492. That year the Jews were expelled from Spain and Christopher Columbus discovered America.

The Crossing of the Ocean

The national unity of Spain, achieved through the marriage of Fernando and Isabel, and through the conquest of Granada, opened up the possibility of undertaking new ventures in the discovery of new lands to colonize and to evangelize. There are very few events in the history of humankind as surprising as the XVI century of Spain, especially when only a few years before the

⁴ González, pp. 31-32.

Moors had had a stronghold in Granada, and Castile and Aragon were two separate kingdoms, with the added contingency that Castile was torn apart by discord and a power struggle.

Christopher Columbus was the catalyst that brought together the energy and financial resources of Spain in an enterprise that was to change the history of the incipient nation, as well as the whole world in a drastic and definitive way. The historians argue about Columbus' character and the purpose of his travels, but one thing is certain: He is the figure that best symbolizes the spirit of the new Spain of the XVI century, the spirit of conquest, the development of the arts, and a zeal for evangelization.

The conquest of the New World can be seen as a natural step after the discovery of the new lands. In all the danger and suffering of the discovery and conquest can be seen a certain mysticism which permeated the spirit of Hispania, from the Crown to the last adventurer who dared to cross the oceans in the frail *carabelas*, or the soldiers of fortune who crossed deserts and mountains discovering and conquering the new lands to lay at the feet of the king and queen of Spain. It could very well be said that Fernando and Isabel felt themselves, as had Queen Esther in the Old Testament story, "called to the kingdom for this hour."

Christopher himself was a mystic of no small degree. "I travel", he wrote in one of his letters, "in the name of the Holy Trinity on whom I rest my hopes for victory." He was proud of the meaning of his name "carrier of Christ".... The ambition of the great sailor was to bring from the recently discovered lands the necessary money to equip an army of 10,000 horsemen and 100,000 infantry, to go to the Holy Land to rescue Jerusalem from the Turk.⁵

Columbus considered his discovery a miracle, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy: "For the coastlands shall wait for me, the ship of Tarshish first, to bring your sons from far, their silver and gold with them, for the name of the Lord your God, and for the Holy One of Israel, because he has glorified you." Isa. 60:9.

⁵ Mackay, p. 39.

The Cross and the Sword

With the discovery of America, Spain acquired a sense of destiny, of mission. She considered herself as a chosen vessel and the "arm of the Lord" to establish his kingdom on earth. Christopher Columbus, Cortés, Pizarro, and all those involved in the conquest of the New World, felt that they were instruments in the hands of God to accomplish his purposes. John A. Mackay expresses this idea saying that "Spain was drunk with religiosity."⁶ The tragedy is that this sense of mission was accomplished with ruthlessness and pitilessness and that in order to "convert" the Indians' they were ready to kill them, if necessary. Following the soldier was the friar; with the conqueror went the catechist, with the sword went the cross. It can be said that this association of the cross and the sword was one of the characteristic elements of Spanish Christianity.

The Spaniard that undertook with Columbus the adventure overseas was in reality only an adventurer, educated in these three principles.... That it pleases the Lord to kill and to rob infidels; that the highest noble classes are the soldier and the priest (as in India); and that all work vilifies (idem), and that the land belongs to the crown, to the nobles that conquer it and to the church that sanctions its possession, taking her share.⁷

No doubt, there were among the conquerors some sincere individuals that truly believed that what they were doing was right and pleasing to God, but in the end, and for the great majority of the Spaniards in America, their main interest was the booty and the cross only an excuse for their actions.

One good example of the way the conquest was accomplished by the cross and the sword can be seen in the dramatic and sad incident of the taking of Atahualpa, the king of the Incas of Peru. As the story goes, when Pizarro and his men were going through the difficult passes of the Andes toward Cajamarca, where the king had his court temporarily, he said to them,

"Don't be afraid of the number of the enemy and because our troop is so small. Even if we were even smaller and their number even greater, greater is God's help to us; he never

⁶ Mackay, p. 41.

⁷ Mackay, p. 44.

leaves his people in need. He will help us to defeat the pride of the gentiles to bring them to the knowledge of our Holy Catholic Faith."⁸

The night before the attack on Cajamarca there were long prayers and a mass was celebrated, promising the victory to God and to the Virgin. The soldiers sang with great piety the psalm "Rise, God, and judge your cause." Without going in detail, Atahualpa was made prisoner and his subjects killed mercilessly. Pizarro offered freedom to the Indian king in exchange for all the gold and silver necessary to fill a room of more than one hundred square meters and as high as the hand of the king could reach. The ransom was paid but the Spaniards did not free the king. After a mock judgment he was condemned to be burned alive. Before doing this, a friar explained a summary of the Catholic faith and asked him to convert to the Catholic faith, saying: "The Pope gave to the kings of Spain these lands to pacify the infidels and bring them under the dominion of the Catholic Church, outside of which nobody can be saved. Pizarro, the governor, has come with this commission in his hand. You should then, Sir, accept to be a subject of the Emperor, give up the cult of the sun and all the idolatries that will take you to hell, and accept the true religion. If you do so, God will give you your reward and the Spaniards will protect you against your enemies."⁹

The dignified answer from the Inca was grave and proud, affirming that he would not be subject to any king and denying the right of any pope to give his lands to anybody. At the end, Atahualpa was strangled at the stake.

Justo L. González makes the following evaluation of the conquest:

The great tragedy of the conquest was not that there would flow over the American continent a multitude of merciless Spaniards, but the fact that those who arrived to these lands were sincere Christians that were unable to see the relationship between their faith and what they were doing. This is true of Columbus and the other discoverers, but also of conquerors such as Cortés and Pizarro, who saw their enterprises as a great service to the preaching of the gospel. The tragedy was, then, that with all sincerity and in the name of Christ the most horrendous crimes were perpetrated. The inhabitants of these lands were robbed of their land, their culture, their freedom, and their dignity with the pretext of giving them the superior culture and religion of the Europeans.¹⁰

⁸ Mackay, p. 48.

⁹ Mackay, p. 49.

¹⁰ González, p. 50.

This misery of the conquest is expressed in a poem, "The Broken Spears," written by an unknown Indian of Tlatelolco, Mexico:

Broken spears lie in the roads;
we have torn our hair in our grief.
The houses are roofless now, and their walls
are red with blood.

Worms are swarming in the streets and plazas,
and the walls are splattered with gore.
The water has turned red, as if it were dyed,
and when we drink it, it has the taste of brine.

We have pounded our hands in despair
against the adobe walls,
for our inheritance, our city, is lost and dead.
The shields of our warriors were its defense,
but they could not save it.

We have chewed dry twigs and salt grasses;
we have filled our mouths with dust and bits of adobe;
we have eaten lizards, rats and worms....¹¹

The Spanish Christ

The Spanish philosopher, Miguel de Unamuno,¹² understood and loved his country so much that he spent his life trying to discover her essence and her soul. In recognition of the religious impact the Moors had on the soul of Iberia, he wrote that the Spanish Christ was born in Tangier. He thinks that the Spaniard is attracted to or accepts pain and suffering because of the Moorish blood in his veins. He expresses his religion through images of Christ in his tomb or on his cross, livid, covered with blood, with an expression of infinite suffering.

While talking with a French friend, about life and death the friend told Unamuno, "You really don't love life even though you are fond of it." The philosopher answered, "Perhaps." His friend replied, "But this is really a cult to death!", "No! Not to death! To immortality!", was the

¹¹ Miguel León-Portilla, "The Broken Spears," in Durán and Bernard, p. 120.

¹² Miguel de Unamuno, Mi Religión y Otros Ensayos Breves (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1924), p. 31.

answer. Unamuno claims that the expression *La joie de vivre* that translates into Spanish as *El gozo de vivir*, the joy of life, is foreign to the Spanish language, and, in fact, to its soul. He affirms that it is a Gallicism that he never found in the classics of Spain. He uses this singular expression: "Man's worst crime is to have been born."¹³

In a beautiful book in which Unamuno tells of his travels through Spain, he has a poignant narration of his visit to the convent of the Sisters of Saint Clare, in Palencia. He describes the love and care the nuns give to a figure of Christ lying in a coffin in their church. He thinks this is the real Spanish Christ. He says:

This Christ, immortal as death itself, does not rise again, what for? He is waiting for death itself. From his half open mouth, black as the unknown mystery, flows toward nothingness but never arrives. Because this Christ of my land is dust.¹⁴

Unamuno goes on, in this moving chapter, describing what he sees and reflecting upon it. He calls this Christ "cadaver Christ." This Christ is unable to think; he is a Christ that was dust and is now dust. Perhaps one of his more moving paragraphs is this:

This Spanish Christ has not lived, black as the humus of the earth, he lies like the prairie, horizontal, lying flat, without a soul and without hope, with his eyes closed, facing a sky withholding its rain and burning the bread. With his black feet, like eagle claws, he seems to want to imprison the earth.¹⁵

The philosopher ends this chapter with these words and prayer:

And the poor Franciscans of the convent where the Virgin Mother was doorkeeper -the Virgin of all sky and all life, that went to heaven without knowing death-cradled the death of the terrible Christ that will not wake up upon this earth, because he, the Christ of my land is only dust, dust, dust..., flesh that does not palpitate, dust, dust, dust, dust..., clots of blood that does not flow, dust, dust, dust, dust...
And you, heavenly Christ, redeem us from this Christ of dust!¹⁶

This idea of death and tragedy is deeply embedded in the religion that America received from Spain. Religion, for the Catholic, was more a matter of believing in a life in heaven,

¹³ Unamuno, p. 34.

¹⁴ Miguel de Unamuno, *Andanzas y Visiones Españolas* (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1955), p. 267. In Spanish Unamuno has a beautiful pun: "Porque este Cristo de mi tierra es tierra," but it is difficult to translate.

¹⁵ Unamuno, *Andanzas*, p. 269.

¹⁶ Unamuno, *Andanzas*, pp. 269-270

beyond the suffering and pain of the present life. This life will change, but it is in heaven, where the Muslim concept of paradise and the Roman Catholic concept of eternal life coincide. Basically, the religion of Spain was a religion centered in Christ, but Christ, in his tomb. In truth, it was a form of a cult to death, even though it is necessary to look for the roots of this cult in the love and passion for life. The Spanish view was that Christ died to give us life but his wonderful life was not the important thing. What was paramount was that his death assured man of immortality, the continuation in heaven of this earthly life.

This religious concept can be seen in the attitude of the people in Spain and in Mexico even now, particularly in the bull fights (*corridos*) where the matador plays with death in a masterful and artistic way. The crowd empathizes with the matador facing death, in the form of the bull, powerful and able to kill and destroy. The long history of bull fighting (*Tauromaquia*) has shown how this concept of playing with death has evolved, even though unconsciously, in the heart of the people. The matador is always trying to outwit his opponent, showing his ability to overcome the bull through acts of courage performed in the most artistic way. For instance, in the sequence of the *corrido* there comes the time to put the *banderillas* in the nape of the bull. The *banderillas* are small darts decorated with bright colored paper and, with one in each hand, the *matador* faces the bull without any protection and, in a masterful way, he plunges them into the nape of the bull in the fraction of a second, avoiding the attack of the bull. This is dangerous in itself, but for some *matadores* it is not dangerous enough. There have been cases when in the midst of a particularly glorious afternoon (The *corridos* are always on Sunday afternoon) when the matador breaks his *banderillas* in two before using it, to show that he is able to face the bull (death) practically unarmed, and still overcome it.

Some *matadores*, to show that they have dominated the beast (death) get close to it, drop their cape and kiss its horns. But the supreme act is the killing of the bull, which is referred to as *la hora de la verdad*, the hour of truth. This is when the matador approaches the bull with his sword and the small cape (*muleta*). In order to execute the *estocada*, he has to lower

his cape and, for a fraction of a second, he is completely vulnerable. He has to prove that he is able to kill without being killed.

This trait of the Moslem/Hispanic character can be seen also in the sayings and songs of the Mexican people. Their popular songs say "*La vida no vale nada*", "Life is worthless." During the Mexican revolution, when they went to battle they used to sing "*Si me han de matar mañana, que me maten de una vez*", "If they are going to kill me tomorrow, let them kill me today." Many popular songs relate the killings and the death of persons just because they were very daring, or in the midst of a *fiesta*, or while in a *parranda* (a wild party). The sayings "*¡Ni modo!*" (There was no other way) and "*¡Ya estaría de Dios!*", "It must have been God's will" represent the same fatalistic feeling. It is not exactly fatalism but the religious feeling, even though unconscious, that the problems of this life will end and everything will be better in paradise. It is really a hope, a longing for immortality. Unamuno expresses this longing:

In view of this risk, and to overcome it, they give me rationales to prove how absurd is to believe in the immortality of the soul; but I don't care about those rationales, because they are only reasons, nothing more, and reasons are not the stuff on which the soul feeds. I don't want to die, no, I don't want it and I don't want to want it; I want to live forever, forever, forever, and this poor I that I am and that feels that I am here and now, this is why it hurts when I think about the problem of the duration of my soul, of my own soul.¹⁷

It is appropriate to finish this section by quoting Mackay's appraisal of Hispanic Christology:

A Christ that is known in life as a child and in death as a corpse, whose destituted infancy and tragic fate are presided over by the Virgin Mother; a Christ that became man in the interest of solving an eschatological problem and whose permanent reality is in a magic wafer that grants immortality; a Virgin Mother that, because she did not taste death, became the Queen of Life, such was the Christ and such was the Virgin that came to America! He, as the Lord of Death and of the life to come; she, as the Sovereign Lady of the present life.¹⁸

¹⁷ Miguel de Unamuno, *Del Sentimiento Trágico de la Vida* (Buenos Aires: Espasa-Calpe, 1945) p. 45. It is very difficult to do justice in a translation to the beautiful way in which Unamuno expresses his ideas.

¹⁸ Mackay, p. 109.

Chapter II

THE MEXICAN SOUL

In this section we will examine three signs that show the Indian roots of the Mexican soul. These are 1) The eagle devouring the serpent; 2) The Plumed Serpent (*Quetzalcoatl*); and 3) The Virgin Mary of Guadalupe, not as a religious belief but as a cultural symbol. In these three symbols can be discovered the anthropological characteristics of a well-developed nation with a solid theology which explains its origin and the meaning of life and death, and the presence of God in the affairs of the nation. These three signs are very well-developed myths that explain some of the deepest questions in the soul of the Mexican and, as such, they do not have a historic base, but as traditions they are very well embedded in the Mexican soul.

On the national seal of Mexico is an eagle devouring a serpent. The origins of this concept go back to the beginnings of the Aztecs as a people and as a nation. Legend has it that many suns ago (the Aztecs measured time by the sun), the tribe left Aztlán, the mythical place somewhere in the North, and began their pilgrimage to the South. They did not know their final destination. They were only obeying the order of their god *Huitzilopochtli*. Like Abraham of the Old Testament they went out, not knowing where to go. Some historians believe that Aztlán was somewhere in New Mexico and that they went into Mexico through the present state of Chihuahua; others think that it was in the area of California and that the old Aztecs made their pilgrimage along the Pacific coast of Mexico.¹ In our presentation we will follow this latter tradition because this will give us the opportunity of considering the origin of the name of the tribe. As the story goes, this people had a long pilgrimage during which many generations passed away, but their

¹ Miguel León-Portilla, *Los Antiguos Mexicanos* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1970), pp. 40-45, 79-88. Alfonso Toro, *Compendio de Historia de México* (México: Editorial Patria, 1969), pp. 191-195. Alberto Rembao, *Pneuma, los Fundamentos Teológicos de la Cultura* (México: Casa Unida de Publicaciones, 1957), pp. 89-98.

elders kept their ears open to hear the voice of *Huitzilopochtli* and they kept the people's faith alive that in due time they would arrive at their promised land.

The people of Aztlán were, in a way, like the people of the Exodus; they were looking for a land and they were guided by their god. It is interesting that they also murmured against their authorities. This happened when they arrived at some sand pits in what is now the State of Jalisco. At the end of the day's march, when the people were resting around the fires and listening to the stories and wise words of the elders, and while the young people were in their own group apart, one of the young people, Teotlipetzín, lamented:

Men, it is very sad to see how hard our life is, walk, walk, walk. To walk is no good. It would be better to stay in one good place of which there are several around here, to cultivate the earth and to plant corn.... One feels like crying when he remembers the stories of the elders, the adventures of our forefathers when they left Aztlán. From where we are now, going back in our minds to the land of the flamingos, is an endless road, white, white, white with the bones of our fathers, grandfathers, and great grandfathers....²

The discussion went on for a long time. The group of young people talked about the meaning of faith, endurance, life and death, and other deep theological questions and finally decided to go and talk the matter over with their priest. When he listened to their murmuring he did not scold or rebuke them, but he asked them to go away and to return in another moon; meanwhile he would talk with God. When the young people came back, the priest was waiting for them with an answer; he said:

Listen to my words, O Flamingos, because it is the direct word of God. This is what God said: Tell my young people to continue being obedient, to continue walking onward till I order them to stop. Tell them that it is necessary to continue walking southward till they see the sign I am going to give them. This is the sign: Where there is water like a lake, and in the water a small island, and on the small island a big rock, and on the big rock a cactus and on the cactus an eagle, and in the beak of the eagle a serpent... there is the place where I want you to build me a *teocalli* (a temple)....³

These were the words from their god and they obeyed them, but something important also happened on that memorable occasion. God had a message that they were not expecting but that made an impact on their future history. God told them through their priest, as

² Rembao, p. 94.

³ Rembao, p. 95.

God had spoken through Moses to the people of Israel, that to prove that the sign was right and true they would have to change their name. Up till then, they had been a people without a clear destiny, but from then on, they were a people with a sign that marked clearly their final destination. From then on, they would not be known any longer as Aztecs or Flamings, but as Mexica, "because I am Mexitli, your god...."⁴

Many suns and moons went by before the Aztecs arrived to the shores of the Lake Texcoco in Central Mexico. There they established their camp and posted guards for their enemies and to keep an eye out in case the sign should appear. One night, when dawn was almost breaking, a young man was standing his guard, tired and almost asleep. He suddenly jumped wide awake, joyfully crying: "The sign! The sign! The sign!" The good news resounded throughout the valley and the whole tribe gathered by the shore of the lake to see the sign. The island was there, the rock, the cactus... but the eagle devouring the serpent was absent. The young guard protested that the rest of the sign had been present but that the eagle had flown away when he started calling the people. Here a long and involved discussion began that lasted a long time, like all theological arguments. Would it be correct to accept part of the sign as the whole sign? Would it be correct to accept the word of only one individual in place of the whole tribe having seen the sign? Finally it was agreed that if one Mexica had seen the complete sign the whole people had seen it, and the testimony of the young guard prevailed and the city was built. This was the origin of the great city *Tenochtitlan*, now Mexico City.

Quetzalcoatl, the Plumed Serpent, was a great influence in the formation of the Indian culture not only in what is now Mexico, but also in parts of Central America. He was a truly mythical character, although not much is known regarding his origin. In some codexes he appears as a god, in some others he appears as a priest. Some kings took this name as part of their kingly and priestly duties. He was the civilizing force among the seven *Nahua* tribes that came to the Mexican Valley, having his origin among the Toltecs, the most civilized of the seven.

⁴ Rembao, pp. 95-96.

As the story goes, some time after the establishment of the Toltecs in central Mexico, a white man with a white beard came, and established himself in the city of *Tula*. He was a wise and kind man. He taught justice and virtue and despised vice and sin. He invented the calendar and taught the people how to cultivate corn and cotton, how to work on precious stones, how to work the metals, and many other arts and crafts unknown till then. He was called Quetzalcoatl. With his labor and leadership the land became another Eden. It produced ears of corn so big that men had difficulty carrying them, pumpkins of enormous size, and cotton already in the most beautiful colors. In this world men lived in peace and freedom amid birds of beautiful colors; their land was truly a paradise. In a word, Quetzalcoatl was the force that made the culture of the Nahuas a great culture, of which the ruins of Teotihuacan are a living testimony.⁵

Miguel León-Portilla's book on the *Náhuatl* culture called Toltecáyotl explains the meaning of this word as it describes the Toltec culture and the influence of Quetzalcoatl upon it. These are his words:

Toltecáyotl, literally, means toltequidad; the essence, the aggregate of the Toltec creations. But we have to dig deep to be able to understand the richness of its meaning. This word has an abstract and a collective sense derived from tolteca-tl. The ancient Mexicans used it to designate what they considered their inheritance, seed of inspiration and motive and ultimate achievements. The toltecáyotl, the legacy of Quetzalcoatl and the Toltecs, included the black and red ink—wisdom—writing and calendar, painting books, knowledge of the route of the stars, the arts, including the music of the flute, goodness and righteousness in human contacts, the art of good eating, the old word, the worship of the gods, talking with them and with oneself....⁶

It is interesting to note that the Conquerors were very astute. When they arrived in these lands they heard about the legend of Quetzalcoatl, how he had been a good god and how all the people loved him, and how once he had gone toward the East and nobody saw him any more. But the legend went on to say that the people were waiting for him, because he was to return to be with his people again, a sort of Second Coming. The Conquerors heard this legend and in many cases

⁵ Toro, p. 334.

⁶ Miguel León-Portilla, Toltecáyotl: Aspectos de la Cultura Náhuatl (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1980), P. 7. This book has abundant information about Quetzalcoatl. Check the index. See also León-Portilla, Los Antiguos Mexicanos and Laurette Séjourné, Burning Water: Thought and Religion in Ancient Mexico (New York: Grove Press, 1960)

they took advantage of it, claiming that Cortés was the new Quetzalcoatl. The Indians believed it and in many cases, especially at the beginning of the conquest, they surrendered without a fight. At the end they understood that Quetzalcoatl would not have come killing, stealing, and destroying.

Quetzalcoatl taught that human greatness grows out of the awareness of a spiritual order; his image must therefore be the symbol of this truth. The serpent plumes must be speaking to us of the spirit which makes it possible for man—even while his body, like the reptile's, is dragging in the dust—to know the superhuman joy of creation. They are thus, as it were, a song to the most exalted freedom. This hypothesis is confirmed by the Nahuatl symbolism where the serpent represent matter—being always associated with terrestrial gods—and the bird, heaven. The plumed serpent is thus the sign of the revelation of the heavenly origin of man.⁷

The origin of the Virgin of Guadalupe is an interesting story. In the year 1531 the Indian Juan Diego was walking by the hill of Tepeyac when he heard some music and a voice calling him. When he went to the place from which the voice was coming it was the Virgin that asked him to go tell Archbishop Juan de Zumárraga to build a chapel for her in that place. The Indian did as the Virgin asked him, but the Archbishop did not believe him. The Virgin appeared to Juan Diego once more with the same order but Zumárraga still did not believe him. The third time the Virgin said that Juan Diego's uncle, who was very ill, would recover but that first he should cut some roses that happened to be nearby and take them to the Archbishop with the same message. Juan Diego did exactly as he was told; he cut the roses and put them in his *jarango*⁸ and went to offer them to the Archbishop. When he opened his *jarango* everybody was surprised to see the image of the Virgin was imprinted on it. This time Zumárraga believed the story and he ordered the construction of the chapel for the Virgin. As the story goes, Juan Diego's uncle was healed at that very moment.

The problem is that in Archbishop Zumárraga's files there is no trace of this story, which should be of paramount importance if it had happened. Fr. Bernardino de Sahagún, a contemporary of the archbishop, says that the hill of Tepeyac was the place in which the goddess *Tonantzin* was worshiped, and that great multitudes gathered there to offer sacrifices to her. The

⁷ Séjourné, p. 84.

⁸ A kind of rustic *zarape*.

name of the goddess means "our mother" and, according to Sahagún,⁹ when the chapel in the honor of the Virgin was built on the site of the old one, the people continued calling her *Tonantzin* with the connotation of "Mother of God".

There are some significant points to consider about this story and its impact on the Mexican people. The first is that the Virgin lost her white European color and took on the brown color of the Indian, identifying herself with the poor and margined instead of with the rich and noble. Another is that the Virgin appeared to an Indian peasant and not to the clergy in high office. It is interesting to note that in the end, the prelate had to listen to the Indian. Furthermore, the face of the virgin is not Indian nor is it Spaniard; it is a mixture of both. It could be said that she is a Mexican Virgin, a symbol of the new race that was being formed-- *la Raza de Bronce*.

Some historians and thinkers see in these facts the expression of a liberationist spirit of an oppressed race. *Tonantzin* "our mother", the creator of life, continues living in the hearts of the people under the guise the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe. At the present time, in the latter half of the Twentieth Century, in a recently-constructed fabulous, ultramodern shrine, she is venerated, robed with stars, in European clothes, with crowns of gold and precious stones. In fact, some scholars think that this story was the best way to protect *Tonantzin* from the destruction of the conquerors. Many idols were saved by burying them under the crosses in churches and shrines, some were buried in the walls of the great cathedrals that were built by the Spaniards. What could be better than to protect the Mother of Life, the Mother of the gods in the very body of the Mother of God of the Christians?

Regardless of the point of view one may have, one fact is evident, the cult to the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe is the strongest element of the Roman Catholic faith in Mexico. It should be remembered that when Fr. Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla called the people of Mexico to start the war of Independence from Spain he set out with a standard of the Virgin of Guadalupe in his right hand.

⁹ Justo L. González, Y Hasta lo Ultimo de la Tierra: Una Historia Ilustrada del Cristianismo (Miami: Caribe, 1980) VII, p. 97.

When Culture and Blood Mix

These two mighty cultural streams, the Iberian and the Aztec, finally met on American soil and that event transformed both cultures so deeply that terms like "Post-Cortesian" and "Post-conquest" could be applied both to the history of Spain and of Mexico. What we have now, culturally and demographically speaking, in México and most of Latin America, is the result of a very peculiar phenomenon. It would be worthwhile to take the two "News" in America as an example, New England and New Spain. In doing this we will follow Alberto Rembao's ideas in his previously cited book, Pneuma.¹⁰

The big difference between the colonization of New England and that of New Spain, was the difference between a transplant and a graft. In the North the Anglo-Saxon colonization took the form of a transplant and in the Hispanic South the form of a graft. In transplanting a culture, moving a group of people, as was the case in the North, the impact is unilateral; there is no collision, amalgam nor miscegenation, there is only a geographical change. In the South the picture is different; it was a graft, and a graft by its very nature is always painful. This graft was person to person; there was resistance, strife and death, but in the end it took root. Spain, coming from Europe in Cortés' vessels did not find an empty land but a great civilization with a great metropolis and a great people. There was a great struggle; it was a conquest which affected both conquerors and the conquered. Maybe a good symbol of this would be to think of Cortés, the conqueror as being conquered by La Malinche, an Indian he fell in love with and who helped him as his official translator, and became the mother of his sons.

It is possible to examine the idea of the graft in the Hispanic conquest, recognizing the fact that in the process of the conquest there was destruction and killing, but the Spaniards were wise to save the Indian race they found in these lands. Following the idea of the graft, they hurt the surface of the tree, just under its bark, to expose the life of the trunk, its pulp and vitality. There, in the very center of life the two races came together, a painful process, but one

¹⁰ Rembao, pp. 62-78.

that was to change both cultures permanently. Europe, grafted into American soil is no longer Europe; the Indian who received the graft is no longer the American Indian. Both sources keep the essential part of their particular culture but the result of the mixing of the bloods is a new people and a new culture. The Mestizo, *la Raza de Bronce*, will create new cities, will write new books, will paint new canvases, and will erect new churches, all on the ashes of the old culture, but the new ones will be completely different.

If we accept the guidance of the historian of culture or the historian of art we discover how well the Hispanic and the Indian culture have mixed. Rembao explains this process saying that in the South the phenomenon works from the branches of the tree to the roots, from top to bottom, while in the North it works from the roots to the branches--European branches in the North, Indian roots in the South. Dr. Alfonso Caso, the great Mexican authority on indigenous affairs, explains this process as follows:

The Aztec Empire was a political reality when the Europeans disembarked for the first time on the shores of Veracruz, and it was, thanks to this political reality, that Spain could subrogate itself at the Empire of the Aztec *tlacatecutlis*¹¹ In the same way, it is impossible to understand the establishment of a viceroyship in Perú if we do not take account of the previous existence of the great Empires established by the Incas on the bases of the small kingdoms that existed before and that they were able to centralize in only one power that controlled military, political, and economic organizations that had existed previously. The existence of the Indian Empires facilitated for Spain the government and dominion of great masses of men who were used to paying tribute to one lord, to carrying on military expeditions under only one commander, to living a political life in a more complex unit than the borough or tribe, and it made possible the rapid diffusion of certain aspects of the European culture, brought by the conquerors to this continent....¹²

In the North it was the matter of a transplant. There were no conquerors but pioneers. They did not find people established in cities with the complex political and religious organization of a *Tenochtitlán* or a *Teotihuacan*, but generally small tribes that were subdued with relative ease. This is not to minimize the effort of the pioneers but the point is to indicate that their struggle was more with nature than with men. Conquering the West was more a conquering

¹¹ Aztec chieftains.

¹² Antonio Caso, *Definición del Indio y de lo Indio* (México: América Indígena, n.d.). Quoted in Rembao, p. 67.

of the desert, the mountain, and the river; these were their *Tenochtitlán* and they conquered them, but not for the English king, but for themselves.

With the pioneers we have a phenomenon that has to do with geography and history. They were Europeans who came with their language, their culture and their traditions. But in due time, while settling down in New England, and especially during their incursion into the West, they were acquiring new ways of living and establishing new traditions. They were losing their European petina and forging a new tradition and a new way of life.

Another aspect of the pioneerism of transplant is related to the topography, the kind of land they found. The vast American prairie was there for the wagons and horses to run over. There were no jungles, no Andes to cross, (although the Rockies were a considerable barrier!) and the prairie offered them a constant invitation to go forward. The horizon is wide and open, no mountain closed the view of what lay ahead, so the pioneer goes forward. Geography and history are on the side of the pioneer; in fact they are his allies. Through this experience of "conquering" the West, there emerged the new culture and the new traditions that in due time would become known as the "American way".

The Creole Christ

The graft had very tangible results in the religious sphere. The amalgam of the Hispanic and Indian religions produced a peculiar faith that can be seen especially in the way that Christ is venerated in the Roman Catholic Churches in Latin America. Leaving aside the way the saints are treated and respected, let us remember that the Christ that arrived on the Mexican shores was the Christ of the popular religious tradition of Spain in the XVI century. As has been explained before, the Spaniards also experienced the grafting of the Moors' soul onto the Iberian soul, producing in the religious field a peculiar kind of Christ and Christian faith. This mixing of cultures produced the kind of Christ that Unamuno calls "cadaver Christ", the Christ that suffers and dies, above all dies, and stays in the tomb, covered with gobs of blood, immobile, lifeless....

Mackay finds that there are at least two characteristics of the Creole Christ, the product of the fusion of the Iberian and Indian cultures. The first is that the Creole Christ lacks humanity.¹³ It seems that the Christ of the people is represented mainly by two aspects of his life, as a babe in the arms of his mother, the Virgin, and as the victim of suffering and death. The first aspect is full of charm and beauty, the second of tragedy and pain. The emphasis is on a Christ that was born and then died. Two important aspects in the life of Christ, and for the faith of the Christian, undoubtedly, are Incarnation and Expiation, but the life of Jesus the man is missing. Jesus the carpenter, the teacher, the healer, what he did during his ministry, his humanity, are practically absent from the faith of the people in Mexico.

This is especially evident during the two great Christian celebrations, Christmas and Holy Week. During Christmas the emphasis is on the Holy Child and the Virgin Mary, the crèche (*nacimiento*) and the angels; the baby is worshiped with songs, dance and drama (*pastorelas*). The custom is to dress the boys and girls as little shepherds (*rancheritos*) to go to the churches to dance in front of the crèche as homage to the Child-God. It is a beautiful season but then nothing more happens till Holy Week, when churches again are full to capacity for the Stations of the Cross, when the people express particular devotions in front of each of the fourteen representations of the events in the passion of Christ. These representations are usually pictures or carved images on the walls of the church. Also during Holy Week the people in Mexico, especially on Good Friday, visit seven different churches. Although they call it the "visit to the seven churches" what they really mean is the visit to seven different Holy Burials (*Santo Entierro*), images of Christ in his tomb, very much like the one Unamuno described in Palencia, Spain, gloomy, dejected, lifeless.... Why do the people venerate this image? Maybe the answer is in the grafting of the Hispanic and Indian culture. Spain offered this Christ to the Indians and they accepted it, being used to blood and death also as part of their human sacrifices to their gods. The fact is that during Holy Week in Mexico in the Roman Catholic Church the high point seems to be

¹³ Juan A. Mackay, El Otro Cristo Español (México: Casa Unida de Publicaciones, 1952), p. 116.

the death of Christ, not his resurrection. Birth and death, but the ministry of Jesus, his witness of the Father seems to be absent.

The other aspect of this Creole Christ is that, in Aristotelian terms, it has a purely cathartic value.¹⁴ The mere contemplation of the image of Jesus and the saints produces a cleansing experience, a lifting of the spirit, a feeling of being in harmony with God, of peace and joy. Even when the images are crude and horrid, the experience is uplifting or, at least, gratifying.

But the fact remains that they are worshiping a dead Christ. Jesus is represented on the cross, in the tomb, or being whipped by the Roman soldiers, but very seldom as the triumphant Christ of the resurrection, the eternal contemporary. Octavio Paz in his appraisal of the Indian religion in Mexico relates:

It is unnecessary to add that the religion of the Indians was a mixture of new and ancient belief. It could not have been otherwise, because Catholicism was an imposed religion. From another point of view, this circumstance was of the very highest importance, but it lacked any immediate interest for the new believers. The important thing was that their social, human and religious relationships with the surrounding world and with the divine had been re-established. Their personal existence became part of a greater order. It was not out of simple devotion or servility that the Indians called the missionaries *tatas* (dads) and the Virgin of Guadalupe *madre* (mother).¹⁵

The persistence of the pre-Cortesian background is not surprising, the Mexican is a religious being and his experience of the divine is absolutely genuine. But the question is who is his god? The ancient earth-gods or the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? This question is answered very clearly by a contemporary Chamula Indian from Mexico:

Holy Earth, holy Heaven; Lord God, God the Son, holy Earth, holy Heaven, holy Glory, take charge of me and represent me; see my work, see my struggles, see my sufferings. Great Man, great Lord, great father, great spirit of woman, help me. I place the tribute in your hands; here is the resting-place of his *chulel*. In return for my incense and my candles, spirit of the Moon, virgin mother of Heaven, virgin mother of the Earth; Holy Rose, for your first son, for your first glory, see your child oppressed in his spirit, in his *chulel*.¹⁶

¹⁴ Mackay, p. 118

¹⁵ Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (New York: Grove Press, 1961), p. 102.

¹⁶ Paz, pp. 106-107. In a note, the translator of the book explains: The Chamulas believe that each human being has two souls; one, the *chulel*, dwells within an animal, while the other dwells within the body.

In many instances popular Catholicism is only a layer over the ancient cosmogonic beliefs. Octavio Paz mentions this same Chemula Indian, as "our contemporary according the Civil Registry, but our ancestor if we consider his beliefs." The Indian speaks of an image of Christ in the church:

This is Señor San Manuel here in this coffin; he is also called Señor San Salvador or Señor San Mateo; he watches over the people and the animals. We pray to him to watch over us at home, on the road, in the fields. This other figure on the cross is also Señor San Mateo; he is showing us how he died on the cross, to teach us respect... Before San Manuel was born, the sun was as cold as the moon, and the *pukujes*, who ate people, lived on the earth. The sun began to grow warm after the birth of the Child-God, Señor San Salvador, who is the son of the Virgin.¹⁷

The mixture of religious ideas is evident. How much of these concepts remain in the minds of the working class, the uneducated people of Mexico? It is difficult to ascertain, but it is almost certain that in some degree they remain in the hearts of the masses. Now we will turn from the Mexican context to consider the Hispanics in this country.

¹⁷ Paz, p. 107. A *pukuj* is the *chulel* of a warlock (n. of the translator).

Chapter III

HISPANICS IN THE UNITED STATES

A brief history

The Hispanics in the United States have a history, but it is a history about which most people know very little. On Thanksgiving Day people remember the events of the Mayflower on which the Pilgrims came to New England in 1620 but there is no equivalent to remember the presence of the Hispanics in this country, even though the oldest state capitol still standing in the United States is in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This was founded by the Spaniards in 1610 while other settlements were founded even earlier, such as El Paso, Texas, in 1608, and St. Augustine, Florida, in 1593.

History is not only a register of past happenings; it also provides a background and an explanation of present conditions. An attempt will be made now to continue briefly what has been said about the people South of the Rio Grande, bringing that history to bear on the lands in the Southwest of this country, especially on California.

What is now New Mexico began with the explorations of the Franciscan Father Marcos de Niza in 1539. He and his companions were looking for the Seven Cities of Cibola and their rumored fabulous riches. Juan de Oñate began settling New Mexico and years later Santa Fe was founded. Florida was first explored by Pánfilo de Narváez and the original exploration of California was carried out by Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo.

The colonizing methods of the Spanish were different from the ones used by the English in the East. The Spanish king and the church were working hand in hand and the imperial desire for expansion went right along with the missionary spirit of the church. The New England spirit was individualistic and democratic from the time the Pilgrims arrived on the shores of America, to the breaking away from the crown of England.

The crown viewed the task of conquest and settlement as a divine mission to incorporate the peoples and their territories, not only into Christendom but also into the Spanish empire. The lofty vision did not deter the crown or its representatives from the profit-seeking which spurred the conquests on.¹

In the settlement of California the figure of Father Junipero Serra is very important. With the establishment of his missions he provided the strongholds necessary for the colonization of this territory. Here can be seen the close cooperation between the king and the church. Junipero had all the support from the crown in his efforts to establish and maintain the missions while the armies used them as strongholds in their struggles with the Indians. The missions were enclosures generally surrounded by barricades where the people learned to cultivate the earth, as well as some useful crafts such as weaving and pottery, but most important, they learned about the new religion and the new culture. Junipero and many missionaries like him, were sincere in their evangelizing efforts. He founded a total of 21, from San Diego to San Francisco; the fact that some of them are still in use now is a testimony to his faith and vision. One of the missions was *El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora de los Angeles*, now the city of Los Angeles, founded in 1781. In 1830 the missions lost the support of the newly-independent government of Mexico.

California was the most northwesterly province of Mexico. Here a handful of *rancheros* held an enormous area far away from the centers of control and of help in Mexico City. In fact, Mexico almost ignored this province and, out of sheer inability, failed to settle it in any substantial numbers. Most of the Mexican residents of the California territory approved of the idea of annexation by the United States because Mexico was weak and far away. In the fights with the Indians there was no help from Mexico and the *rancheros* had become accustomed to trading with the United States. So, the military occupation of the territory by United States troops, in 1846, was welcomed.²

¹ Isidro Lucas, The Browning of America (Chicago: Fides/Claretian, 1981), p. 19.

² Joan W. Moore, Mexican Americans (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976), pp. 17-18.

Mexico won her independence from Spain through the efforts of Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, who started the movement in the little village of Dolores, in 1810. His followers were largely untrained Indians and, because the Creoles and the church failed to join the movement, his forces were soon defeated and Hidalgo was caught and executed. It took Mexico eleven years of bloody fighting to wrest independence from Spain, but struggles with the United States continued. Texas declared its independence from Mexico in 1836 and in 1846 the United States annexed it.

By the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, concluded on February 2, 1848, Mexico ceded all territory north of an irregular line extending along the Rio Grande and from El Paso, by way of the Gila river, to the Pacific. In return the United States paid Mexico \$15,000,000 and also assumed claims of United States citizens against Mexico amounting to some \$3,000,000.³

By and large the Catholic Church remained faithful to the king of Spain through all this tumultuous period. It was as frightening to the church as it was frightening to the crown. The independence movement started in Mexico was followed by the other nations to the south, with more or less success. All were looking for independence. This was not only a territorial and political revolt; it was the result of a deeply embedded revolutionary ideology that called for the end of the "divine right" of the monarchy and an end to the special relationship between church and state. It proposed a secular government, based on democratic principles, which justified its power on the will of the people and not on any divine right.

It is interesting to note at this point that the Catholic Church historically has always been on the side of the rich and powerful. In Mexico it opposed independence, and during the social revolution of 1910 the Church lined up with the dictator, Porfirio Díaz. Even after the triumph of the revolution she still did all she could to maintain the status quo, and her attitude has been the same in all the countries of Latin America. Not until recently, after the Second Vatican Council, has some change been evident, in some countries and among some priests. Still the Church tries to keep aloof from the real problems of the society in which she should exercise her

³ Henry Bamford Parkes, "Mexico: History" in Encyclopædia Britannica (Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 1970), XV, 333.

mission. It may be said that, with a few evident exceptions, in our days she opposes the spirit and teachings of the theology of liberation.

Almost coinciding with the occupation of California by U.S. troops was the discovery of gold. The "gold rush" brought to northern California at least 100,000 miners every year. Massive immigrations of Mexicans and Chileans suddenly were arriving at a great rate-- 13,000 Latin Americans in 1849 alone. But this made manifest a problem that had existed for some time and that was to manifest itself in various ways in the future. The Anglo miner felt that "a greaser was a greaser" even if he owned 35,000 acres of land and was pure Castilian. In the mines, far away from any authority or law, Mexicans were lynched, robbed, and expelled on countless occasions. Many Mexicans had to abandon mining and go to the towns to join the ranks of the landless workers. "The mining troubles were an early and a bad precedent for American-Mexican relations in California."⁴

In southern California the situation was different. Mexican *rancheros* owned the land; the Indians did the work, and the Anglo settlers were few and unimportant. Most of arable southern California was owned by no more than fifty men and their immediate families, including a group of about a dozen Mexicanized Yankees.⁵ The fact that Indian labor and cheap land were available was a deterrent for the emerging of a lower Mexican class. Furthermore, at the time the immigrants were few, and no economic enterprise needed any appreciable quantity of wage labor. Southern California also was saved from the Anglo squatter because northern California offered a better climate and better land. The squatters found arid southern California unattractive.

In 1850 the *rancheros* still shared power in local and state government, but racial tensions began to surface. Los Angeles was inhabited by an explosive combination of Mexicans, Anglos, Indians, and Chinese. Soon violence, struggle and crime appeared. Even the state contributed to this state of affairs: taxes were imposed upon land; laws were no longer published in Spanish, and in 1855 a law was passed forbidding school instruction in Spanish. To

⁴ Moore, p. 18.

⁵ Moore, p. 19.

make matters worse in 1862 a devastating flood was followed by two years of extreme drought, which almost destroyed the source of Mexican wealth in southern California. Mortgages, legal fees, taxes, and low cattle prices completed the ruin. By the early 1880s there were no longer any Spanish names in the government offices in Southern California.

The final blow to the Mexican hegemony was what can be called the "railroad demography". The railroad reached San Francisco in 1869, and Los Angeles in 1876, connecting the two main cities in California. In 1877 a direct line to Los Angeles from the East was completed. In 1887 alone the railroads brought into southern California more than 120,000 settlers. At the time there were only 12,000 Mexicans in the area so, in just one year, the Mexican majority became a local minority. This influx of new people produced a land boom that ended most of what remained of Mexican ownership and the great ranches became the property of financiers, railroad developers, town planners, and irrigation companies. By 1900 southern California was inundated by the tide of Anglo immigration and the Mexicans were reduced to landless labor, and made politically and economically impotent.

Socially the long-settled charter-members had become "Mexicans" indistinguishable from the new immigrants from Mexico. Perhaps more important, by now all Mexicans, whatever their isolation from other Mexican communities, had in common a heritage of racial conflict.⁶

Present Day

The demographic conditions of the Hispanics in southern California are astonishing. In just a relatively few years the Hispanic population has grown to fantastic proportions, so much so that any Spanish-speaking person can find himself very much at home in Los Angeles, where an Argentinian can watch the latest movies from his homeland at any dozen theaters, while a Guatemalan can find a soccer league composed entirely of players from his

⁶ Moore, p. 20.

country. In Chicago, says Ariel Zapata, a journalist who emigrated from Colombia last year, "it is possible to live, work and play without speaking any English at all."⁷ He illustrates this:

Time magazine called the Los Angeles area, where I live, "The New Ellis Island." Waves of immigrants pour in like the surf at Malibu. Parts of the city change almost overnight from one ethnic group to another. Blacks in South Central Los Angeles are complaining that Mexicans are "spoiling the neighborhood." In Hollywood a fast food stand, operated by Koreans, sells "Kosher tacos." Students in the Los Angeles Unified School District speak 104 languages, with over 1,000 students speaking each of Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Cantonese and Armenian.⁸

From the same source we take the following ethnic make-up of Los Angeles:

For the past eight years he has been collecting and updating facts concerning the ethnic makeup of Los Angeles area. Here are the known groups with the best estimate of population: Hispanics (4 million), Blacks (972,000), Germans (450,000), Italians (350,000), Koreans (270,000), Armenians (225,000), Iranians (200,000), Japanese (175,000), Arabs (160,000), Yugoslavs (150,000 divided sharply between Serbians and Croatsians), Chinese (150,000), Filipinos (150,000), Vietnamese (100,000), Russians (90,000), Israelis (90,000), Dutch (75,000), American Indians (60,000), Hungarians (60,000), Samoans (60,000), French (55,000), Thai (50,000), Greek (50,000), British (50,000), Asian Indian (30,000), Dutch Indonesian (30,000), Egyptian Copts (10,000), Romanian (10,000), Turks (5,000), and Gypsies (5,000). He fully expects information on other groups to surface as time goes by. One television station, KSCI, has programs in English, Spanish, Arabic, Farsi, Armenian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Cantonese, and Mandarin.⁹

From the same source we learn that Miami is the second largest Cuban city where some downtown stores carry signs "English spoken here." There are more Jews in New York City than in Tel Aviv. Chicago is the second largest Polish City and Los Angeles is the second largest Mexican City. There are more Hispanics in Los Angeles than in seven Latin America countries. In fact, the United States is the fifth largest Spanish-speaking country in the world.

⁷ Time (July 8, 1985) 37. "Immigrants: Hispanics, A Melding of Cultures."

⁸ C. Peter Wagner, A Vision for Evangelizing the Real America, p. 4. An address presented to the National Convocation on Evangelizing Ethnic America, Houston, Texas, April 15-18, 1985.

⁹ Wagner, p. 5.

If this information is to serve as context for evangelization among the Hispanics it is important to know the trends. Non-Anglo minorities are likely to increase disproportionately as the years go by, due to at least two important factors. One, generally speaking, Hispanics have a significantly higher birth rate than Anglos. Two, immigration into the U.S. has been on the increase, as the following table shows:

1930s	53,000 per year
1940s	104,000
1950s	252,000
1960s	332,000
1970s	429,000
1980s	over 600,000 ¹⁰

These figures do not include the undocumented immigrants. No one knows exactly how many enter the U.S. each year but it is known that the Immigration and Naturalization Service in 1976 apprehended and deported an average of 2,400 per day, and that by 1983 the average was up to 5,500, or over 2,000,000 per year. Estimates say that realistically we can believe that 600,000 undocumented enter the U.S. per year for permanent residence.

Some analysts think that Hispanic Americans by the year 2000 will total 30 million to 35 million, or 11% to 12% of all U.S. residents, vs. 6.4% in 1980. If so, they would constitute the largest American minority, outnumbering blacks and, indeed, people of English, Irish, German, Italian or any other single ethnic background.¹¹

This phenomenon, the "silent invasion from the south", is so steady that some people predict that before the turn of the century California will once again be a Spanish-speaking state. Peter Wagner makes us laugh: During the 1984 Olympics a joke was going around Los Angeles: "Did you notice that Mexico didn't send a team to the Olympics this year? Why? Because everyone who could run, jump, or swim was already here."¹²

¹⁰ Wagner, p. 6.

¹¹ "Immigrants," p. 36.

¹² Wagner, p. 7.

A Note on Hispanic Immigration

Between 1925-1929 and 1955-1964, Mexico contributed more than fifteen percent of all immigrants to the United States. Even if the record for the early years of this century are incomplete, it can be affirmed that at least 1.3 million Mexicans entered the United States between 1910 and 1964. To this figure should be added the millions of undocumented immigrants that crossed the border and now reside mainly in the southwest. Along with the high birth rate of the Mexican America population, immigration from Mexico has been a primary source of the growth of the Hispanic population in this area.

Leo Grebler presents five characteristics of Mexican immigration. The first significant wave of Mexican immigration began in 1909-1910, when the European immigration had reached its peak and began to decline. Since then, with variations in numbers, Mexican immigration, both legal and illegal, has reinforced the Hispanic population steadily, creating a permanent problem of acculturation. In the case of most European groups, when immigration declined or nearly ceased, the rate of acculturation increased greatly.

The second characteristic of Mexican immigration is the variety of ways in which it is accomplished: permanent legal immigrants; undocumented immigrants; Mexican nationals who live in Mexico but commute daily to jobs in border cities; agricultural workers who come for seasonal employment on their own volition, on contract; or the many tourists, businessmen, students, and visitors who enter for limited periods.

Another characteristic would be its intensity. Since 1955, Mexico has supplied more permanent visa immigrants than any other single country. Mexico is also the largest source of non-immigrant visitors, tourists, students, and temporary workers. In addition there are far more undocumented than legal immigrants.

The fourth characteristic is geographic. Migration from Mexico occurs along a 1,600 mile border that has few natural obstacles to prevent crossing it.

The river bed of the Rio Grande in certain seasons is so dry that it is possible to cross on foot at many places. At other times and places, men can swim across (hence the term "wet

back"), or they have come on ferries run by human bootleggers. West of the Rio Grande the boundary cuts across hundreds of miles of desert land. Wire fences erected in the vicinity of important points of entry have been extended over time, but many of them present no serious problem to the "border jumper." Consequently, it has always been difficult to control migration across the Mexican border. In fact, this was once a favorite point of entry for non-Mexican aliens who were barred from immigration or believed they would be excluded.¹³

In the fifth place, the intentions of Mexicans coming to the United States seem to have been less certain, and much more varied, than those of millions of European immigrants. The Europeans, in most cases, made a great and irrevocable commitment when they entered the United States; on the other hand, many Mexican immigrants have come to this country as an experiment, an adventure, or as a temporary economic expedient.¹⁴

In the case of many Mexicans, the commitment involved in going north was much less momentous or permanent. If a Mexican entered on a regular immigration visa, he could return without incurring extraordinary emotional or monetary cost. If he came for temporary employment and liked the experience, he found it often not too difficult to stay and, being unfamiliar with the ways of impersonal bureaucracy, may have given little thought to the technicalities of his legal status. Many of those who slipped in illegally to begin with could hope to go back some time and reenter properly. Moreover, large numbers of Mexican immigrants, especially those of the earlier periods who came from a society with more locally oriented loyalties, may have had a perception of the international boundary which was at variance with its formal significance.¹⁵

This is the field and this is the context for the evangelizing work of the California-Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. It is an awesome task and vision, demanding tremendous effort and imagination. The simple numbers of the Hispanics around us and the way they are increasing could demoralize the toughest evangelizer, but the call is there and should be heeded. The California-Pacific Conference has heard the call and has responded. In the next section her response will be evaluated.

¹³ Leo Grebler, Mexican Immigration to the United States (Los Angeles: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, University of California at Los Angeles, 1966) p. 9. Cited by Clifton L. Holland, The Religious Dimension in Hispanic Los Angeles (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1974) p. 5.

¹⁴ These five characteristics are taken from Grebler, quoted by Holland, as indicated in the previous footnote.

¹⁵ Grebler, p. 10. Cited by Holland, p. 7.

Methodist Beginnings

There is not much documented information about the beginnings of the Hispanic work in Southern California by the Methodist Church. However, it is known is that the work began in 1879:

The Methodist Church began its ministry among Mexicans in Los Angeles in 1879 when the Fort Street Methodist church established a Spanish-Speaking mission under the leadership of Antonio Dias (sic), who was an ordained minister. The Southern California Conference of 1880 reported that eighty people had become church members through the Fort Street Mexican Mission.¹⁶

For some reason, the Methodists discontinued the mission in 1882 and Dias (sic) became a Presbyterian minister and worked in establishing Presbyterian work in the Los Angeles Area. Even so, "There was some work being done in the three districts--Santa Ana, Los Angeles, and Pasadena, but there seems to have been no cohesiveness and direction at the time."¹⁷ By 1918 work had been established also in Northern California, and in 1919 it was reported that there was a total of 549 members in the Hispanic churches. Furthermore, three institutions were established to help Hispanics, Frances DePauw, a home for girls in 1898; the Spanish American Institute, a school for boys in 1913; and Plaza Community Center, a social service organization, in 1915.

In 1920, in Los Angeles, the Latin American Mission was organized. On July 3, 1941, the Latin American Provisional Conference took its place and in 1956, in Redlands, this provisional Conference was integrated into the Southern California-Arizona Conference, former name of the California-Pacific Annual Conference.

Reading the Journals of the Latin American Mission and the Provisional Conference one thing is immediately evident: the driving force behind this work was Dr. Vernon

¹⁶ Edward Drewry Jervey, The History of Methodism in Southern California and Arizona (Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1960), p. 91. Cited by Holland, p. 247.

¹⁷ José Moreno Fernández, "The History and Prospects of Hispanic Methodism in the Southern California-Arizona Conference of the United Methodist Church" (diss., School of Theology at Claremont, 1973) p. 38.

M. McCombs. His zeal, tenacity and capacity for work were inexhaustible. His coming to the Conference is an interesting story:

By 1911 a USC student by the name of Ruth Iliff had for four years been helping Mexican children with their English. Miss Iliff invited a young missionary just returned from Peru who was studying Spanish at USC, to speak to one of her classes. This initial contact led her to rush to a meeting of Methodist Episcopal ministers at First Church of Los Angeles at Sixth and Hill Streets. They were startled to see a young woman run into the chapel, stand in the middle of the center aisle, and exclaim, "I've found a man!" The ministers simply stared at her. "I've found the man you are looking for," she continued. "He would be perfect as head of Latin-American work in Los Angeles. He used to be a missionary in Peru. He speaks Spanish beautifully, and most of all, he loves those people. Put Vernon McCombs in charge and I know we can get somewhere helping the Mexicans." One of the ministers spoke: "I've met him. He came back to the United States because he wasn't well. Why should we put a sick man on the job?" Nevertheless, after some discussion, the ministers decided to consider the man.¹⁸

With Dr. McCombs leading the work progress was steady and growth was evident. In the Journal of the Latin American Mission for 1935 there is a map that shows that the mission reached from the Pacific Ocean to the Mississippi river. How he could carry such a tremendous work is beyond comprehension, but his report for that year mentions, with the greatest of ease, the work in San Francisco, Albuquerque, El Paso, Los Angeles, Denver and Kansas City. A map of the United States accompanying the report has this explanation:

The Latin American Mission serves in 9 states, an area equal to 25 Pennsylvanias. These states have 1,313,343 "Mexicans," and 700,000 other Latin Americans. 45 Circuits, 4 schools, 3 Christian settlements are Methodism's contribution. 5,096 members beside affiliated and adherents, with 4,945 S.S. scholars and 1,513 Epworth Leaguers show steady advance. The border between the U.S. and Mexico is 1,453 miles long. This is 50 per cent longer than the Great Wall of China. Whom God had made neighbors, let love now make friends.¹⁹

Undoubtedly, this was the highest point, extension-wise, for the mission. It would be interesting now to compare some statistics at crucial points in the history of the Methodist Church in relation to her work with the Hispanics.

1920

The beginning of the Latin American Mission

Preaching Points

21*

¹⁸ Fernández, p. 39.

¹⁹ Journal of the Latin American Mission, 1935, p. 27.

Pastors	20
Membership	686
Total Paid	\$1,677

*Including 2 Portuguese and 1 Italian Points

1941

Beginning of the Provisional Conference

Preaching Points	39
Pastors	37
Membership	3965
Total Paid	\$1,880

1955

End of the Provisional Conference

Preaching Points	39
Pastors	30
Membership	3230
Total Paid	\$79,810

These statistics refer to thirty-five years of Methodist work with the Hispanics. It seems that the work was carried on without any dramatic results. The number of preaching points was the same for a good number of years; the number of pastors increased from 1920 to 1941, and then decreased again in 1955, giving an average of 29 pastors for the period. The increase in membership is surprising: from 1920 to 1941 it goes from 686 to 3965, but then in 1955 it comes down to 3230, a loss of 735 members in 14 years. The item that is really surprising is the great increase in giving: from \$1,677 in 1920 and \$1,880 in 1941 it goes up to \$79,810 in 1955. The best possible explanation is that in those fourteen years a good work in stewardship was carried out and the churches responded. All in all, the Provisional Conference was doing good work, even though not making startling strides.

Critique of the Mission and the Provisional Conference

Some good things could be said about the work of the Provisional Conference. For one thing, it brought cohesiveness to the Hispanic churches. This does not imply that the work was disorganized during the time of the mission, but reading the Journals the impression is received that the feeling of pastors and lay people was that they were more a part of the work and that the church was more their church when they had their own Conference. In the 1941 Journal there is an interesting note: After Dr. McCombs read the names of the Latin American Board of the Methodist Church it was suggested that more of the Hispanics should be included in the board. It seems that the people were ready to work with more enthusiasm.

There were different committees in the Conference but great emphasis was placed on evangelism, Christian Education, and youth work. It seems that these aspects of the work of the church were close to the heart of Dr. McCombs and he did all he could to enhance that work. There was good team work and leadership development. This can be seen especially in the youth caravans organized by the Methodist Youth Fellowship. They traveled to different places in the Conference as youth teams to bring encouragement and training to the youth groups. It is interesting to read a report of one of the chairmen of the Methodist Youth Fellowship. After talking about his work during the past he says:

According to pastoral reports there are twenty-seven Methodist Youth Fellowship groups organized in our Conference with a weekly average attendance of five hundred and seventeen, a gain of forty six over last year, it is a small gain but it is a gain. My wonder is: What's wrong with our literature or what's wrong with our youth? Surely we are not getting the results that a group of that size should show if it has been trained with our Methodist material and leadership. If we are part of the Methodist Church, we must enter into the pattern of our great Methodist Church, in doctrine, government and program. Once more we will organize Institute (sic), camp meeting, rallies and special conferences.²⁰

²⁰ Journal, 1946, p. 39.

There were also evangelistic caravans and the Sunday Schools were always prominent in the annual reports and the secretary of the Board of Education was always supported by Dr. McCombs.

Another thing that was accomplished during the years of the mission and the Provisional Conference was to keep the Annual Conference aware of the Hispanic presence within the church. Undoubtedly, this was a paramount concern of Dr. McCombs' till his retirement in 1946, due to poor health. It would be preposterous to try to deny that the Conference invested time, energy and money first in the mission and then in the Provisional Conference, and that the most conspicuous figure during those years was Dr. McCombs. But it is important to scrutinize the methods that were used at the time to carry on the work of the Kingdom.

If we think of Dr. McCombs as the soul of the work of the Mission and the Provisional Conference it can be said that the work was carried on in a very idealistic way. Idealism is required of all good leaders, but it has to be tempered by a realistic approach to life. His reports in the Journals are full of optimism and enthusiasm for the future of the work he was carrying on, and never a word of criticism, in the best understanding of the word, seems to appear. It is hard to believe that things were always going well in the churches and that the work of the ministers was perfect.

According to the *In Memoriam* written by J. Scott Willmarth, Dr. McCombs was an avid reader and a gifted writer and speaker.²¹ This can be seen in his annual reports and in the articles he wrote for *El Mexicano*, the little paper published for the Mission from 1913 to 1923. He called his report for 1926 *Turning of the Tide* and he introduced it with this paragraph:

The tide is turning in many momentous movements. Real prohibition is coming rapidly. War is facing a real outlawing. Industry is really turning toward cooperation and the development of men and manhood. The youth movement is turning again home. God is intrusting great enterprises to very young Christian leaders today. We see a tide setting in toward world consciousness. The World Court and the dawn of disarmament are signs that 'man's last fear—the fear of man'—is being dispelled, and world trust is turning like a tide towards pacific oceans of peace, world friendship and human welfare.

²¹ Journal of the Latinamerican Conference, 1951, p. 49.

One of the new currents is the interdenominational ~~comity~~ movement. More vital still to us is the inter-Methodist tide setting in. Each Methodist enterprise formerly detached is becoming a real sector of a united Methodism. 'All one body we' is our definite goal since the last General Conference.

The Latin American Mission is feeling these strong tides which are turning toward the Kingdom of God which 'consists of the brotherly sons of God using their powers in a friendly fashion.'²²

It is necessary to take into consideration that Dr. McCombs is addressing a group in 1926, but even so the idealism is evident. His report for 1927 is called *Building for Time and Eternity* because the building of La Plaza on Olvera Street was being completed. It would have been sad for the good superintendent to realize that the addition that then was being built "for time and eternity" would end up in the hands of a secular organization, even one related to the Mexican people-present site of the Mexican consulate.

But the main criticism of Dr. McCombs is his paternalism. He was a tireless worker and loved the Hispanics, but he conducted the work like a symphonic orchestra director with a baton, telling the pastors and lay leaders when to play their instruments and how hard they should do it. Seemingly, all did very well but they were kept in their own little theatre playing their own sweet music, to the pleasure of the director and a handful of complacent listeners. It seems, for one thing, that the Hispanics were considered less than human or, at least, incomplete, till they were fully "Americanized" through the work of the Mission and the Provisional Conference. In his report for 1920 he has a paragraph titled precisely "Americanization" and he writes: "Last year the report to the Annual Conference made reference to Americanization as a keynote. We did not like the term 'Americanization' then, and we like it still less now; but the process to which all refer has been going on this year in our work as never before." Then he goes on to talk about interracial contacts, English classes and then, in another paragraph, exclaims:

When the gospel was first presented to one of these other sheep in a foreign land, she cried out, 'I thought there must be a God like that.' By God's good help, all in this work are leading masses of Mexicans and other Latin Americans, not only to grasp this new and true conception of God, but also to exclaim, 'We thought there must be an America, and Americans like these.'²³

²² Journal of the Latin American Mission, 1926, p. 21.

²³ Journal of the Latin American Mission, 1920, p. 25.

In a little book that Dr. McCombs wrote about the Mexicans he has a list of values that the Mexicans must learn in order "to blend into American Life":

1. The value of cooperation and the sacredness of contract.
2. Loyalty to the Government.
3. Submission when in the wrong.
4. The value of "getting past the dead points."
5. The cultivation of high ideals and incentives in life.
6. A wiser recourse to law.
7. The meaning of real business responsibility.
8. The wisdom of learning English.²⁴

Even though just the reading of these points reveals the paternalistic spirit behind them, the explanation of each point really shows the spirit behind the work of the Methodist Church with the Hispanics during the time of the Mission and the Provisional Conference. In the same book it is interesting to read the advice on how to start a mission among the Mexicans:

1. Locating the mission plant is half the battle.
2. Get their view-point and work from that angle.
3. Become familiar with their racial traits and beautiful language.
4. Daringly lead them right out to full-orbed activity in Christian work.
5. Do not weary them, their attention is short.
6. "Talk to the heart."
7. Make up sermons which are bona-fide, urgent appeals and deliver them in a real and direct fashion.
8. Formulate a cheerful, natural, cultural order of church service.
9. Lead the pastors and people out into a well-defined and unselfish Christian program for the community.

²⁴ Vernon Monroe McCombs, From Over the Border (New York: Council of Women for Home Missions and Missionary Education Movement, 1925) p. 91-92.

10. Prayerfully strive to play up the racial spirit and excellencies in terms of American and Christian ideals.

11. Temper the message, program and administration with due consideration of the people's past.²⁵

No doubt some of these points were valid in 1925 and could be applied even now, but the paternalistic approach is evident, especially in 5 and 10. Explaining each one of the points, the author makes clear that when the Anglo is working with the Hispanic he should expect to find himself working with somebody lower than him in the social scale. At the end the Anglo worker, with patience and dedication, will have a group of good Americans, democrats, and probably Christians. Facing page 64 in this book there is a couple of pictures with this common legend under them: "Mexicans? No! They are Americans in the making!"

Critique of Integration

It is pertinent now to think about the time of *integration*. In his dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Religion, Dr. José Fernández makes a good summary of the events that culminated with the integration of the Provisional Conference into the Southern California-Arizona Annual Conference. On November 7, 1952, Bishop Gerald Kennedy appointed a committee with representatives of both the California-Arizona and the Provisional conferences to study and make recommendations regarding the future of the Provisional Conference. The committee met with Bishop Kennedy on May 4-5, 1953, and submitted a report stating that integration was desirable for the following reasons:

1. It would make possible more dynamic churches to meet the missionary challenge of our ever increasing population.
2. It would bring into actuality a larger measure of the Christian brotherhood which is the genius of our faith.

²⁵ McCombs, p. 170-175.

3. It would permit a more adequate financial support of the Hispanic ministry.
4. It would encourage a larger number of promising Hispanic youth to enter the Methodist ministry.
5. It would lift the general standards of the Hispanic people.
6. It would facilitate closer cooperation between the ministers and members of the Hispanic and our other churches.
7. It would provide more adequate supervision for the Hispanic churches which are located in two large episcopal areas--San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Finally, on June 18, 1956, in Redlands, California, the Latin American Provisional Conference held its last session. At the opening of its one hundred sixth session, the Southern California-Arizona Conference received the ministers from the former Latin American Provisional Conference.²⁶

The question now is, Have the enumerated reasons proved to be valid? Has the lot of the Hispanic churches improved? Has the work among Hispanics increased? Are the Hispanic churches growing and multiplying? The obvious answer is no. Even a quick check of the statistics shows that the Hispanic churches have lost a lot of ground since the time of integration. As has been shown before, at the end of the Provisional Conference the picture was this:

Preeching Points	39
Pastors	30
Membership	3230
Total Paid	\$79810

Now let's examine the present condition of the churches in the present California-Pacific Conference. The list of the churches within the conference is as follows, including the membership registered in the Journal of the conference:

Huntington Park: First	*280
Huntington Park: Florence	*56

²⁶ Fernández, p. 119-122.

Long Beach: Atlantic Ave.	*45
Long Beach: Latin American	46
Maywood	*88
Los Angeles: La Plaza	201
Los Angeles: La Roca Eterna	59
Los Angeles: La Trinidad	92
Los Angeles: Rosewood	*70
Pasadena: Latin American	115
San Ysidro: Iglesia Metodista	111
Anaheim: El Sinai	91
Norwalk: Iglesia de Cristo	30
Pico Rivera	66
Santa Ana: El Getsemani	63
Pacoima: El Mesias	86
Santa Paula: El Buen Pastor	105
	<hr/>
	1604

*Indicates churches with Anglo and Hispanic membership. These numbers are not exact figures but approximations. In conversation with the pastors of these churches the present writer was told that the books of these churches are kept together and they gave approximate figures. In the case of Huntington Park: First and Huntington Park: Florence, at the time of this writing they are in the process of merging into one church to be called Huntington Park United Methodist Church, and they had available only the figure given for Huntington Park: First.

Besides these churches there are two Hispanic congregations established under the wings of some Anglo churches, but there are no statistical data for them. One is in Hawthorne and the other in Glendale: Wesley.

The statistics on Hispanic pastors is as follows:

Elders	12
Probationary members	1
Associated members	1
Elders in Anglo churches	4
Local Pastors (Part time)	4
Local Pastors (Full time)	2
Elders serving less than full time	1
	—
	25

Subtracting the four Hispanic pastors serving Anglo churches, the total of pastors serving Hispanic churches is 21, including part time and full time local pastors and the elder "serving less than full time."

Comparing these statistics with those of the Provisional Conference we have this picture:

Preaching Points:

Provisional	39
Present	19
	—
Loss	20

Pastors:

Provisional	30
Present	21
	—
Loss	9

Members:

Provisional	3230
-------------	------

Present	1604
---------	------

	—
Loss	2626

These statistics are eloquent; they show that since integration the Hispanic churches have been losing congregations, pastors, and members. In thirty years, from 1955 to 1985, the Hispanic churches have lost almost two thirds of their membership and seemingly, the decline is not arrested yet. The only gain is in the field of finances, the 1984 Journal reports a total paid by the Hispanic churches of \$717, 501, a really substantial gain over the total paid of \$79, 810, reported at the end of the Provisional Conference. It is interesting that in 1984 one church, El Buen Pastor in Santa Paula, paid almost as much as the amount that all the churches paid in 1955.

But this financial gain should be considered in relation with the general improvement of means of the Hispanics in the Methodist churches of the California-Pacific Conference, especially after the Second World War. A good number of the membership now has good jobs and salaries, own their homes, have at least one car, and can travel overseas with relative ease. In the church of El Buen Pastor in Santa Paula, before the Second World War most of the members worked in the orange and lemon groves as pickers or performed other unskilled work. Now no one works in the fields but they are electricians, plumbers, teachers, persons with their own enterprises, with two or three cars in the family, and with some real estate as an extra income.

At any rate, the present picture is one of regression instead of advance. Maybe buildings and equipment are better than they used to be, but the Hispanic churches in general are smaller and fewer in number now than during the Provisional Conference. Was integration a mistake? Would it be better to go back to the Provisional Conference? What could be the solution for the present decline of the Hispanic churches?

To answer these questions it would be convenient to start with a critique of integration. What was accomplished in Redlands, California, in 1956, could be interpreted in

different ways. Some would say that it was a necessary step and a blessing for the Hispanic in the California Pacific Annual Conference. Others would say that it was necessary in order to be able to bring the Hispanic pastors, salaries and pensions up to the same level with their Anglo colleagues. But listening to some of the Hispanic comments on the subject one might think otherwise. For instance, in his dissertation, José Fernández affirms that integration was "not merger but absorption" and there was some fear and resistance among the people. In an informal exploratory meeting held between pastors and lay people of the Provisional Conference and the former Southern California-Arizona Conference, also represented by pastors and lay people, when a tentative vote was taken only one pastor, Reverend Nicolas Dávila, and one layman, Mr. Frank Pino, voted against integration.²⁷ The feeling is that perhaps the rest were afraid to express their real feelings about it. One expression heard sometimes among the Hispanic pastors is that "integration was a liquidation" and that maybe in that historical informal meeting the majority of the Hispanics were afraid to express their real feelings.

Elías Galván, in his dissertation, written in 1969, after talking about the problems and the failures of integration has these words:

It is obvious that integration on this basis did not come easy, nor has it produced the expected results. Among denominational officials there is a general dismay that "integration" has not worked. The second, or third generation of Mexican-Americans are not transferring in mass to the Anglo churches. On the other side, the Spanish-speaking ministers fell into a demoralizing state when they lost control over their work and saw the closing of many of their churches. More than ten years have passed after integration and the Latin churches have experienced a decrease in their membership without a substantial increase of Spanish-surnamed persons in the Anglo churches, and a critical shortage of leaders.²⁸

Then he goes on explaining how integration was unfair. The Hispanic pastors were not given equal status in the conference. Some pastors affirm that the only good thing that came from the integration was their increase in salary. And maybe the two things that Galván adduces to explain these are right. For one thing the conference was not ready for such a gigantic step as

²⁷ Fernández, p. 119.

²⁸ Elías Gabriel Galván, "A Study of the Spanish-speaking Protestant Church and her Mission to the Mexican-American Minority" (diss., School of Theology at Claremont, 1969) p. 103.

integration, in fact, perhaps neither of the conferences were ready. The Anglos were not ready to accept the Hispanics as equals and the Hispanics were suspicious of the Anglos. Friendship and trust are the result of working together and failing or accomplishing things together. Both conferences had worked separately for such a long time that they did not know each other as they should in order to think in terms of integration.

The other aspect mentioned by Galván is that integration was accomplished in haste, without giving enough time for real study and preparation to really know all the implications of it. One point that has been mentioned frequently is the lack of Hispanic leadership for the churches and for the important positions in the machinery of the conference which, in 1955 was felt, by the Anglos, to be acute. Some would say that this is true even today. Interestingly enough, it took eighteen years for the cabinet to appoint the first Hispanic as a District Superintendent. Subsequently a second one was named. The former recently became the first Hispanic Bishop ever elected by United Methodism. The fact is that there is a tremendous shortage of Hispanic leaders at the local church level and at the conference level. This should not have been overlooked by those who engineered the integration; it was evident then, as it is now, that more well-prepared and well-trained leaders would be necessary to accomplish real integration and not an "absorption" or a "liquidation."²⁹

It seems that the idea in the mind of the leaders of the conference was the same that reigned in the mind of McCombs: to use integration to bring about the acculturation or Americanization of the Hispanics which had been difficult to accomplish till then by any other means. Galván thinks along these lines:

The liberal element in the denomination saw the ethnic church only as a step in the acculturation process of the individual, thus, having a temporary function. Since the "melting pot" theory of acculturation was prevalent in the sociological field, the ethnic church was seen as necessary to work with the recent immigrants of Mexico, but there was the complete certainty that the second generation would attend the Anglo churches. That the Spanish-speaking churches had survived so long was incomprehensible to these people. Other saw the ethnic church as an obstacle to assimilation, thus, integration of separated bodies was seen as the solution to many problems.³⁰

²⁹ Galván, p. 103-104.

³⁰ Galván, p. 102-103.

Here is expressed again the idea of the "transplant." The conference wanted to solve the "Hispanic problem" by absorbing it into its fold and in the end to obliterate it, closing its eyes to the rich heritage that the Hispanic people represent. That it was an assimilation instead of an integration could be defended, but what is evident from the statistics is that an annihilation of the Hispanic churches has been in progress wittingly or unwittingly and this has to be stopped.

What is needed in the conference is not a transplant but a graft. Without argument, the trunk is the Anglo church, strong in numbers and with a long history of accomplishments, and also with a cultural background that could enrich the Hispanic church. The Hispanic church is the branch to be grafted. It comes with a rich cultural background also and with a history that could make the Anglo church richer. The question is, how this grafting may be accomplished? If, so far, integration has not produced the results that were expected, what can be done to produce them?

Furthermore, these questions refer only to the relationship between the Anglo and Hispanic churches within the California-Pacific Conference, but the millions of Hispanics outside the churches but all around us should not be forgotten. The point of view of the present writer is that to have a healthy graft it is necessary to have a healthy branch and this can be accomplished only through strong Hispanic churches, but since the Hispanic churches are weak, in order to have stronger churches we must have strong, dynamic, and intentional evangelism. In order to insure a healthy graft, the trunk cannot leave the branch by itself, but must give it all the nourishment, vitality and power that it possesses. In turn the branch will bring whatever vitality it has along with all the potential of its original source, in other words, all the potential and richness of the Hispanic culture. In the end, the branch will produce fruits in abundance, perhaps different from those that the trunk and the branch were producing separately, but certainly they will be fruits of great value for the church and the Kingdom.

Chapter IV

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Looking for Identity

The Mexican American is an eagle, looking for a place to rest. For centuries his ancestors flew high, beyond the highest mountains and into open skies, their cultural achievements astounding even those who conquered them. They were artists, architects, builders, warriors, educators, philosophers and poets. But suddenly, while flying, he found that he had no place to land, to rest and make his nest. When he started his flight he had a land, a country, a history. Then he discovered that land, country and history were taken from him. He flew higher and higher, trying to discover a new land, to see whether he could discover his own people and institutions. And, after a long time, he did. But everything was different. When the eagle landed he saw his own people, but they were different. They were living in their old land, but the land were not theirs; they were living in their old towns, but other people were running them; they were speaking their old language, but the new rulers of the land spoke a strange language. The eagle rested from his flight, sadly built his nest, but he was forever wounded.

This parable tries to explain the Hispanic predicament in America and particularly in Southern California. When he arrives in this country, with documents or without them, he finds himself in a new culture: new patterns of behavior, new systems of education, and above all a new language. Language is the best cultural tool, if you have it you will be a part of it, if you do not have it, you will always be marginalized.

There is a consistent pattern that can be discovered among Hispanics regarding the use of English. Very likely, the first generation arriving into America could not speak English; the second generation was bilingual, being able to speak Spanish and English; the third generation is monolingual again, but now speaking only English. This phenomenon has strong cultural

repercussions that can be detected in some families. For one thing, the grandparents have difficulties communicating with their grandchildren and the grandchildren find themselves in a sort of limbo because they do not feel like Mexicans themselves, and at the same time they do not feel completely at home in the Anglo culture. In many ways and through different actions he is asking himself and the world: Who am I?

The Hispanic in our cities and towns today would like to be recognized as a vital and important element in society, and then, at the same time he is afraid to work to attain this recognition. Maybe Octavio Paz is right when he says:

The Mexican, whether young or old, *criollo* or *mestizo*, general or laborer or lawyer, seems to me to be a person who shuts himself away to protect himself: his face is a mask and so is his smile. In his harsh solitude, which is both barbed and courteous, everything serves him as a defense: silence and words, politeness and disdain, irony and resignation. He is jealous of his own privacy and that of others, and he is afraid even to glance at his neighbor, because a mere glance can trigger the rage of these electrically charged spirits. He passes through life like a man who has been flayed; everything can hurt him, including words and the very suspicion. His language is full of reticences, of metaphors and allusions, of unfinished phrases, while his silence is full of tints, folds, thunderheads, sudden rainbows, indecipherable threats. Even in a quarrel he prefers veiled expressions to outright insults: "A word to the wise is sufficient." He builds a wall of indifference and remoteness between reality and himself, a wall that is no less impenetrable for being invisible. The Mexican is always remote, from the world and from other people. And also from himself.¹

In another paragraph, the same author describes how the Mexican is perennially looking for roots:

The history of Mexico is the history of a man seeking his parentage, his origins. He has been influenced at one time or another by France, Spain, the United States and the militant indigenists of his own country, and he crosses history as a jade comet, now and then giving off flashes of lightning. What is he pursuing in his eccentric course? He wants to go back to the catastrophe he suffered: he wants to be a sun again, one day. (Was that day the Conquest? Independence?) Our solitude has the same roots as religious feelings. It is a form of orphanhood, an obscure awareness that we have been torn from the All, and an ardent search: a flight and a return, an effort to re-establish the bonds that unite us with the universe.²

Who am I? asks the Hispanic of himself. The Rev. Jim Williams, a member of the Portland, Oregon-based Luis Palau Evangelistic Team, who has spent years counseling Hispanics

¹ Octavio Paz, The Labyrinth of Solitude (New York: Grove Press, 1961) p. 29.

² Paz, p. 20.

says: "As I see it, the biggest problem facing any Hispanic in the U.S. is his self-image. Who am I in this new society."³ And in this quest he joins the present day Mexican, as Paz has helped us to see. Who am I? It is impossible to answer this question for the Hispanic, but at least it is possible to study the way he lives and acts in the American society and how the American society has reacted to his presence in her midst. In the next pages an attempt will be made to analyze this aspect of the life of the Hispanic.

The Hispanic Family

Bishop James Crumley, Jr., of the Lutheran Church in America, was representing his church at the Lutheran World Federation at Budapest when he received word that his brother-in-law, a man who was Crumley's former pastor, who had led him to ministry and remained a model, had died. Immediately, the bishop flew back home to South Carolina for the funeral. He was criticized for leaving such an important assembly for a funeral and Crumley, in his regular pastoral letter, tried to explain his action. The following paragraph is part of his explanation:

I believe it to be a genuine spirituality that underscores how only I can fulfill my role in my family. It is the place above all others where God has made me unique. No one else can fill the place for me where I relate to parents, brothers, sisters, spouse, and children. Only I am Bob's son, Annette's husband, Frances' father. Here above all other human relationships do I have a particular identity. Someone else will be pastor to the people to whom I was pastor; someone else will be bishop of the church. But no one else will ever fill my place in my family relationships.... Faith urges me to give whatever is necessary to nurture, strengthen, and build those relationships. That take time--time to love, to serve, to enjoy, to celebrate, to mourn-together.⁴

These words express well what the family means to the Hispanic. According to Nathan Murillo, there is no such a thing as the Hispanic family "type", but it can be affirmed that, for the Hispanic, the family is the most important center of living. It means shelter, but much more than that, it means refuge in life's storms, rest when weary, counsel when in trouble.

³ William Conrad, "Hispanics in the U. S. A.," Latin American Pulse (October 1980) p. 3

⁴ James Crumley, Jr., "All Are Indispensable in Their Own Families." Context, Promotion issue, n.d.

The family is the center of life for the Hispanic but this social nucleus refuses to be systematized into a rigid pattern. Murillo tells us that all attempts to understand and categorize the Hispanic family fail:

The more one does this, the more obvious it becomes that there is no real way to arrive at significant universals or generalizations regarding the Mexican American family as it exists in this ethnic group. The reality is that there is no Mexican American family "type." Instead there are literally thousands of Mexican American families, all differing significantly from another along a variety of dimensions. There are significant regional, historical, political, socioeconomic, acculturation, and assimilation factors, for example, which result in a multitude of family patterns of living and coping with each other and with their Anglo environment. More precisely, there are families that are poor and a few that are wealthy; there are families where Spanish is the exclusive language spoken in the home and others in which it is never spoken. There are families who trace their ancestry back to the Spanish forefathers and others who trace their ancestry back to their Mayan, Zapotec, Toltec, or Aztec forefathers. Some families were living on the land which is now the southwestern part of the United States before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock while others have immigrated to the United States only in recent years.⁵

Even if it is not possible to describe the Hispanic family it is necessary to recognize its importance in the life of the church, and particularly in the Hispanic church. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops has this to say:

The tradition of commitment to family is one of the distinguishing marks of Hispanic culture. Although there are variations among Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and other Hispanics, there are shared family values and cultural attributes among all Hispanics. Either nuclear or extended, the family unit has been the privileged place where Christian principles have been nurtured and expressed and evangelization and the development of spirituality have occurred.⁶

In a note to this quotation we learn that a 1974 report by the Illinois State Advisory Committee to the Commission on Civil Rights points out the following characteristics of the Hispanics: orientation towards the person rather than towards ideas or abstractions; commitment to individual autonomy within the context of familial and traditional Hispanic values; emphasis on the central importance of the family; emphasis on being rather than doing; emphasis on the father as the main authority figure.

⁵ Nathan Murillo, "The Mexican Family," in Carol A. Hernández, Marsha J. Haug and Nathaniel N. Wagner Chicanos, Social and Psychological Perspectives, (Saint Louis: Mosby Company, 1976), pp. 15-16.

⁶ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, The Hispanic Presence, Challenge and Commitment (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1984), p. 21.

While it is difficult to be too specific since not all the families follow a uniform pattern, it is possible to describe a pattern and find an example that will describe a good number of families to help us see the context of the evangelization that will be treated in the following chapter. If this family is not the norm for all Hispanic families, it can be affirmed that it represents the spirit and characteristics of many Hispanic families in Southern California. This example is taken from an article published in the newspaper *La Opinión*,⁷ as part of a series on Latinos in Los Angeles, and from it some characteristics will be lifted up that the present writer feels could be applied to a good number of Hispanic families in the area under scrutiny.

The story of this family centers around Arcadio Yñiguez and Guadalupe Salazar, and their sons, and their sons' sons. Arcadio came from Nochistlán, a small town in the state of Zacatecas, in central Mexico, fleeing the Mexican Revolution during the first great wave of immigration in 1913. His pilgrimage took him eventually to Chicago, where he met Guadalupe and married her. After some years Arcadio died and Guadalupe married Tiburcio Rivera, who, after giving Guadalupe several children, also died. The family has been in the United States for more than fifty years now, and most of this time has been spent in Los Angeles. In 1976 the Senior Citizens Clubs of East Los Angeles awarded the Mother of the Year Prize to Guadalupe. She had six children, twenty-eight grandchildren, and ten great-grand children, with an extended family of more that two hundred members.

From this family several things emerge. The first and most obvious is that it is the typical big Mexican family, all living in the same geographical area, with frequent contacts among them. They do not try to evade each other but, on the contrary, they enjoy being together and doing things together. They have fiestas and the parents share with their children the stories of the forefathers and of the old Mexico. They had the custom of getting together in somebody's patio on Sundays to eat together and to share the latest gossip. When Ofelia, one of Guadalupe's daughters, visited Mexico for the first time she said that she had the impression that she knew

⁷ Marita Hernández and Robert Montemayor, "Raíces," *La Opinión*, Los Angeles, Calif., (July 24, 1983) p. 1 passim. All references to this family are taken from this article.

already the names of the flowers and of the trees, the smell of the earth, and the spirit of the Mexicans, because of the stories she had heard from her mother and other relatives.

But not everything was so pleasant and gay. Rudy, the only son of Arcadio and Guadalupe, remembers the acts of discrimination he experienced while growing up. He remembers how most of the recreational places were prohibited to the Mexicans and how the only entertainment for them was to go to fiestas at some friend's house or to go swimming in some nearby pond. In the theaters the Mexicans and Blacks had to go to the balcony or sit in the back of the theater. They could not use the public swimming pool, except on Wednesdays and, he remembers with some resentment, that only because they changed the water on Thursdays.

For Ofelia, her first contact with Anglos was at the school. There she found out very soon that it was "us against them", Mexicans against Anglos, a struggle in which she is involved even now. She remembers how the Mexicans could not speak in Spanish at school and if they did, they were punished. This was extremely frustrating for her, and for many like her, because they were prohibited to speak Spanish at school and they were not allowed to speak in English at home. She decided that her children would not go through that experience so, naturally, Spanish began to be used less and less among the Mexicans. One thing that Ofelia remembers with some anger is the fact that one Anglo lady in the barrio called her "dirty Mexican" when she recalls with pride that her mother gave so much importance to the cleanliness of their home and their bodies.

Amado, who became Ofelia's husband, feels frustrated because he is out of work. He worked for twenty-three years for a trucking company that went out of business and he has been without employment for almost a year now. He is fifty-two, but his frustration is so deep that he spends his days loafing around with nothing concrete to do and without talking to his family. Many like him were suffering in 1983, when unemployment among Mexicans was 15.3%, while the total unemployment rate was 9.9%. Amado's lament was: "You work all these years, trying to get ahead, to progress, and suddenly you find yourself on the brink of losing everything; it shouldn't be like that."

And, then, Guadalupe laments, philosophically, things are not the same now that they were, say, thirty or fifty years ago. Even families are different. She recognizes that now everybody in her own family is better off today. For one thing Rudy, that suffered so much racism now lives in West Covina with a good job and with a wide circle of multi-racial friends. Guadalupe is happy but she worries about the future of her family; most of her grandsons do not speak Spanish any more, and some have left their parents' religion, namely, Roman Catholicism. She deplores: "Imagine, they do not pray to the Virgin Mary any more."

But Guadalupe need not be so concerned about family traditions; they will continue as the traditions of a people and a culture. Ben, the son of Ofelia, expresses this assurance when he affirms that the family stories are as important to him as the stories about George Washington, that he learned at school. "The stories of my family," he says, "awaken in me a desire to know where I came from in order to know where I am going to." He knows about the work and hardship that Guadalupe, and Arcadio, and Tiburcio, and all the rest went through and he remembers them with love and appreciation. He is proud when he affirms: "I am the product of a historical event.... The people who live for a long time in the same place fall in love with that piece of land. My ancestors died and were buried here and are part of this land. Los Angeles is our home."

The last time that Rudy saw Arcadio Yñiguez, his father, was in 1944, when Rudy had just enlisted for military service, at the age of seventeen. The patriarch wanted to talk to his son. Rudy vividly remembers the encounter: His father offered him the opportunity to go with him to Mexico, if he did not want to serve in the army, but Rudy's answer was: "I owe nothing to Mexico; everything I have is in this country, all my hopes are in this land." Remembering his father reaction, he thinks he liked his answer.

Machismo

The concept of machismo is almost synonymous with Mexican or Hispanic maleness, thanks to the work of Octavio Paz in his already mentioned book, *The Labyrinth of Solitude*. This has become the classic locus for the explanation of this concept. He explains how the macho is the male who rips open the female, who is pure passivity, defenseless against the exterior world. The relationship between them is violent and determined by the power of the male. The idea of violence pervades the meaning of the word, and the dialectic of the "closed" and the "open" thus fulfills itself with an almost ferocious precision. "One word sums up the aggressiveness, insensitivity, invulnerability and other attributes of the macho: power. It is force without the discipline of any notion of order: arbitrary power, the will without reins and without a set course."⁸

Unpredictability is another element in the character of the macho. He is a humorist and his jokes are huge and frequently end in absurdity, like the famous anecdote of the man who "cured" his drinking companion of his headache by emptying his pistol into his head. The macho commits unforeseen acts that produce confusion, horror and destruction. Paz explains that it is impossible not to notice the resemblance between the macho and the Spanish conquistador. He is the model, he determines the image of the Mexican people of the men in power: caciques, feudal lords, hacienda owners, politicians, generals, captains of industry. They all are machos.

Finally, according to Paz, there is no special veneration for God the Father in the Trinity, but there is a profound devotion to Christ as the Son of God, the youthful God, the victimized Redeemer. The village churches have a great number of images of Jesus--on the cross, wounded, or covered with thorns, and blood--in which the realism of the Spaniards is mixed with the tragic symbolism of the Indians.⁹ "The Mexican venerates a bleeding and humiliated Christ, a

⁸ Paz, p. 81.

⁹ Remember Unamuno's description of the Christ in the convent of the Sisters of Saint Clare, in Palencia.

Christ who has been beaten by the soldiers and condemned by the judges, because he sees in him a transfigured image of his own identity."¹⁰

For some, this concept of machismo is exaggerated. Almost everybody accepts it as a characteristic of the Hispanic, but there are different explanations for it. Elaine S. Levine and Amado M. Padilla have this word of warning:

Much has been written about machismo, the tendency to assert superiority and dominance, among traditional Hispanic males. Machismo, as the term is commonly construed, expresses itself through multiple sexual conquests, sensitivity to insult, and a latent capacity for violence. This description is probably an exaggeration; in reality machismo may be related to the fact that the traditional Hispanic male has a more responsible, less restrictive social role than the female. There are so many exaggerated and unsubstantiated beliefs about machismo that therapist must be very cautious not to incorporate fallacious ideas that could interfere with an effective therapist/client relationship. It can be damaging to a patient for the therapist to assume that the patient is stereotypically macho--for example, that he is involved in multiple sexual relationships simply because he is an Hispanic male.¹¹

Dr. José Arreguín has this to say about machismo. He feels that machismo is a common phenomenon, perhaps accentuated in the Latin culture due to the type of organization of the society during the time of the Colony, when the Spaniards conquered Mexico, and maybe, also, due to the influence of Roman Catholicism that brought from Spain the concept of the superiority of the male over the female. Probably this idea found an acceptance in the Indian culture because there too women were of little significance. Dr. Arreguín is acquainted with Octavio Paz's ideas and reminds us that, according to Paz, machismo, is probably the result of the anger of the male because the female let herself be violated by the Spaniard conqueror. The female organ is called colloquially in Mexico as *la rajada* or *la partida*, the fissure, the opening. And when somebody does not behave as manly as he should it is said of him that *se rajó*, that he opened himself up without fighting, remembering the Malinche, the Indian woman that surrendered to Cortés and became his mistress. Dr. Arreguín agrees with Paz that perhaps machismo is the expression of the anger of the male that surrendered to the conqueror without fighting.

¹⁰ Paz, p. 83.

¹¹ Elaine S. Levine and Amado M. Padilla, Crossing Cultures in Therapy, Pluralistic Counseling for the Hispanic (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1980), p. 32.

But Dr. Arreguín thinks that the idea of machismo has been greatly exaggerated through commerce and the media. One thing he has observed: Less education, machismo more evident; more education, machismo less evident. This can be seen in the Mexican barrios, where the poor exercise their machismo openly, while it is less evident among the middle and upper classes. Then Dr. Arreguín reflects on the importance of this concept as a context for evangelism among the Hispanics and he points out: No doubt, one of our strategies of evangelization among the Hispanics is that we should aim to reach the male, the father of the family, then the rest of the family will be reached through him.¹²

Idealism

Along with machismo as one of the characteristics of the Hispanic personality should be presented idealism that is also an integral part of his soul. The best symbol of Hispanic idealism is Don Quixote, Cervantes hero, who, inspired by chivalrous ideals went around the fields of la Mancha and became the symbol of one who looks for the best in men and who is not afraid to risk all for his goal, enduring even ridicule and sacrifice. Now he represents a part of the Hispanic soul and has a secure place in the Hispanic people in America. Some considerations are appropriate here: Don Quixote is known also as the Knight of the Sad Figure, due to his demeanor. Cervantes describes him as a lean, emaciated man riding on an equally lean and emaciated horse. Certainly, the reader of the book has the feeling that he is looking at a strange figure and, at some points in the story, he is laughing and the next page he will be crying with Don Quixote. His deeds are memorable and all of them are centered around one idea or vision that he has in his soul. Nowadays in the Hispanic countries idealistic deeds or the pursuit of a goal seemingly beyond human possibilities is called a *quijotada*, a quixotism.

¹² Interview with Dr. José Arreguín, Hispanic Department, Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, Calif., September 26, 1985.

The sad figure of Don Quixote reminds one of the sadness attributed to the Indians of America, and also calls to mind the illustration of the transplant and the graft used earlier. It is very accurate to say that the spirit of Don Quixote has been transplanted to America. The Knight of la Mancha resides in the heart of the Hispanics living in the lands once conquered by the Spaniards, but while the lands were conquered by the power of the sword, the souls of the people were conquered by the idealism of the Man of la Mancha. Gonzalo Báez-Camargo, the author of the sonnet at the beginning of this dissertation, has another poem in the same book called *Don Quijote en América* where, using poetic license, he tells how Don Quixote, at the impulse of his idealism, and mounted on Rocinante, crosses the oceans to come to America.¹³ The poet describes the portentous deeds that Don Quixote accomplished in *Andahuac* (México), Argentina and other countries of South America. Then, in next to the last verse Báez-Camargo affirms that Don Quixote is not dead, that he lives in every heroic deed, in every enterprise where egotism is absent, in every action that tries to bring justice to everybody. He ends saluting the "divine craziness of Don Quixote."

Some people affirm that the American Indian is submissive by nature and that he lacks the enthusiasm and energy to accomplish great things. They are correct if they look only at the surface of the people, but a deeper more careful look at the history and character of the people will show a different picture. Gastón García Cantú, a noted contemporary Mexican historian, affirmed recently that it is a mistake and prejudicial to speak of Mexicans as being psychologically submissive. This reference helps to elucidate the Mexican character:

Historically, a colonized people is a subjugated people. That's very different from being submissive. The Mexican people lost their independence but never surrendered their desire for freedom. They have made three great revolutions, those of 1810, 1855 and 1910. They are people struggling for possession of the land, and they have not hesitated to rise up with, and at times without, arms.¹⁴

Subjugation and submission are inflicted on a people but the idealism that is in their soul cannot be extirpated; it can be suppressed but never eradicated. It is interesting to

¹³ Gonzalo Báez-Camargo, *El Artista y Otros Poemas* (México: Casa Unida de Publicaciones, 1946), pp. 64-67.

¹⁴ Marc Cooper and Greg Goldin, "So Says Gastón García Cantú," *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, (January 26, 1986) pp. 21-22.

consider that when the Spaniards arrived on the shores of America they brought with them the spirit of Don Quixote, his idealism, and that this beautiful branch from the Hispanic tree was grafted to the trunk of the American Indian. In the poem at the beginning of this dissertation there is a line where Báez-Camargo refers to *la lira de bronce de Netzahualcoyotl*, the bronze lyre of Netzahualcoyotl. He was one of the Aztec kings, like the poet king, David of the Old Testament. We are fortunate that some of Netzahualcoyotl poems are extant. And the sensitive soul of the Amerindian purifies its sensitivity, deepens its emotion, and clarifies his vision because of the graft of Don Quixote's idealism in his very soul.

In Báez-Camargo's poem there are other two lines that throw more light to this idea: *Si con Iihuicamina flecharon los luceros, con el de Tilantongo derrotaron al sol*. If with Iihuicamina they darted the stars, with the one from Tilantongo they overcame the sun. Iihuicamina was another king of the Aztecs and his name means "Archer of the Sun." There was an archer who arrived in the valley of Tilantongo, an area in the southern state of Oaxaca, which, as the story goes, was owned by the Sun. The archer of Tilantongo challenged the Sun to decide who would be the owner of the land. It was late in the afternoon and the circle of the Sun was touching the horizon. The warrior, having pronounced his challenge, aimed at the Sun and shot his arrow. At that precise moment the Sun dropped behind the horizon so the warrior of Tilantongo proclaimed himself the master of the land.

There are thousands of Netzahualcoyotls, Iihuicaminas, and warriors of Tilantongo in our days among the Hispanics, and it is possible to say that in no small part, this is due to the graft of Don Quixote branch in the soul of *Anahuez*.

Work and Poverty

There is a subtle irony about the way the Hispanic community views work and economic well-being. The Hispanic, both male and female, are hard working people. Going against the familiar stereotype of the man sitting by a *nopal* (a cactus) asleep under a big sombrero, and the idea that the Hispanic is the man of the *siesta* (nap) and of *mañana* (tomorrow), reality shows

that the Hispanic wants and likes to work and that he is a hard worker. It has been proved that the real cause for the poverty of the Hispanic has been the manipulation of the size of the labor force. For instance, in times of labor shortage, when Hispanics would be able to press for higher wages, the immigration laws are relaxed. From 1951 through 1964, Public law 78 allowed the recruitment of Mexican nationals, *braceros*, as field hands, thus diminishing the bargaining power of the native Hispanic workers. And then, during economic recessions, many Mexican-American citizens, along with undocumented workers and *braceros*, have been forced to return to Mexico, with the economic repercussion being felt in a negative way in the Hispanic communities while the Anglo industrialists enjoyed the benefit of this manipulation.¹⁵

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops perceived the reality of this irony when they declared:

In general, most Hispanics in our country live near or below the poverty level. While limited improvement in their social and economic status have occurred in the last generation, the Hispanic community as a whole has yet to share equitably in this country's wealth--wealth they have helped produce.... Well over half the employed Hispanics work at non-professional, non-managerial jobs, chiefly in agricultural labor and urban service occupations. In both occupational areas, the courageous struggle of workers to obtain adequate means of negotiation for just compensation has yet to succeed.¹⁶

In the series of articles published in *La Opinión*, referred to earlier, there is another article on work among the Hispanics in Los Angeles. In it there is statistical information that is very pertinent to the subject under consideration. The Hispanic, more than likely, will be a laborer, more so than the Anglos or Blacks. In 1981 the Hispanics made up the 44.8% of the worker population. Even when statistics suggest that today there are more Hispanics in professional and managerial jobs than ever before, many of those professionals and managers, especially the women, are in low-paying positions.

A total of 16.5% of Hispanics work in service occupations, as porters, cooks, dental assistants and firefighters. While the majority of the field workers are Hispanics only

¹⁵ Levine and Padilla, p. 61.

¹⁶ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, p. 6-7.

3.8% are Mexican-American, which contradicts the generally held idea that the majority of the Mexican-Americans work in the fields.

The annual index of unemployment among Hispanics is high, 13.8%, which is much higher than among the Anglos with only, 8.6%, but lower than the index for blacks which is 18.6%.

The Hispanics are ready to work and to work hard, according to a survey of the Los Angeles Times, taken by I. A. Lewis. This survey made clear that the Hispanics identify themselves with the "Protestant ethic of work" better than any other ethnic group. When they were asked what they considered to be most important in life, 48% of those who answered the survey said it was to work hard, even if you don't like your work.

In spite of the general belief that hard work will bring a better life, the survey revealed that in the previous twelve months, more Hispanics than Anglos or Blacks had suffered from cuts in their income because of temporary unemployment or the reduction of working hours.

The problems of the Hispanics in the work force have to do with their inability to speak English, their low level of education, and racism. As an example of the latter a recent study of the Federal Commission on Civil Rights discovered that, given the same qualifications, education and age, for example, ethnic minorities and women would be the last to be employed.

To present the other side of the coin, the article we are citing ends with a list of twelve Hispanic enterprises that made between \$10 and \$72 millions in 1982. All of them were founded by an Hispanic and at the present time are run also by Hispanics.¹⁷

Education

Ernie, lean, and with bright eyes, is the son of Mexican parents. His situation is representative of many boys and girls in the public school in Southern California. His mother went to school for only two years in Mexico, and his stepfather, an unemployed welder, never

¹⁷ Nancy Rivera, "Trabajo," La Opinión, Los Angeles, Calif. (August 11, 1983) p. 5 passim.

went to school. None of them speaks English. He has five brothers and two sisters. Ernie, even if he was born in Torrance, is trapped between two cultures because he is unable to speak English or Spanish correctly. His friends speak English and his classes are conducted in English but at home his parents speak to him only in Spanish and now, in seventh grade, Ernie cannot speak English properly and understands very little Spanish, and his tests show that he is already two grades behind his Anglos classmates. According to all odds, he is a natural candidate to drop out.¹⁸ What really is Ernie's problem?

Robert A. Cervantes, an educator in the State of California, affirms that when an Hispanic is in junior high he is two and a half grades behind his Anglo classmates, and by the time he is in high school he is from two and a half to four grades behind. Thomas P. Carter, from the Sacramento University, who has studied the problem of the education of the Hispanics for twenty-five years, says that part of the problem is that the educator, for years, has established very low levels of education for the Hispanics, so naturally, even when they attain those levels, they are below their Anglo peers. Cervantes adds that some explain the problem by saying that the Hispanics are the result of the "culture of poverty" and then develop labels to apply to them like apathetic, disoriented, introverted, shy, frustrated, and others similar to these. But he makes clear that the low level of learning among Hispanics should be explained by the problems of language and the low level of expectancy, as mentioned before, as well as these additional factors: segregation, different patterns of education and discrimination in the schools, high level of absenteeism and the teachers' insensitivity of the Hispanic culture.

The Los Angeles Times presents this picture: The students. The Hispanics make up 25% of the students in the state and the 49% in Los Angeles. According to the State Department of Education 23% of the 1,045,000 of the Hispanic students progress satisfactorily, or they are very close to their normal level for their grade. Another 31% that do not speak English well are below their level till they learn English well. The majority of them participate in bilingual programs. The other 46% is considered as being able to use English properly, but their work is

¹⁸ Robert Montemayor, "Educación," La Opinión (Agosto 1, 1983) p. 1 passim.

unsatisfactory, or they are below their level. Many of the drop-outs belong to this group. The State Department of Education points out that the number of drop-outs among the Hispanics in secondary education has been 45% for the last twelve years. Progress. The State Department of Education informs that, in general, Hispanics repeat the course in double proportion to Anglos and that twice as many Hispanics, in relation to the Anglos, read below grade level. Expectations. John Goodland, Dean of the Faculty of Education at UCLA, believes that Hispanics can learn, but he feels that for a long time they have been kept in the academic lower levels where the subjects taught were not enough to prepare them for the university and higher technology. We should overcome the idea that the Hispanics are unable to learn.¹⁹ The Catholic bishops have these important words:

Lack of education is an important factor keeping Hispanics poor. While more Hispanics now finish high school and college than did ten years ago, only 40 percent graduate from high school, compared with 66 percent of the general population. Hispanics are under-represented even within the Catholic school system, where they account for only 9 percent of the student population.

Educational opportunities are often below standard in areas of high Hispanic concentration. Early frustration in school leads many young Hispanics to drop out without the skills they need, while many of those who stay find themselves in an educational system which is not always supportive. Often Hispanic students are caught in a cultural cross fire--living their Hispanic culture at home, while feeling pressured at school and at work to assimilate and forsake their heritage.

Impersonal data tells us that Hispanics are numerous, rapidly increasing, of varied national origins, found everywhere in the United States, socio-economically disadvantaged and in need of great access to education and the decision-making processes. But there is a human reality behind the dry, sometimes discouraging data. We see in the faces of Hispanics a profound serenity, a steadfast hope, and a vibrant joy; in many we recognize an evangelical sense of the blessing and prophetic nature of poverty.²⁰

Coming closer home, Santa Paula, the city where the present writer has been a pastor for nine years, could serve as an example of the conditions of education in Southern California, outside of metropolitan Los Angeles. Santa Paula is a beautiful little city, 65 miles northwest of Los Angeles and about 15 miles inland from the coastal cities of Oxnard and Ventura. This Santa Clara Valley city of 21,000 inhabitants is surrounded by lemon, orange and avocado

¹⁹ "Latinos en las Escuelas, ¿Por Qué Fracasaron?," La Opinión (August 1, 1983) p. 6.

²⁰ National Council of Catholic Bishops, p. 7.

acreege. Its unique mild Mediterranean climate long ago attracted a good number of Hispanics, who used to work in the groves but now are employed in a variety of jobs, earning good salaries and enjoying a stable and secure life. However, there is also a number of Hispanic agricultural workers who depend on the groves for their living and many undocumented Hispanic workers still come to work for periods of time.

Santa Paula has wrestled with the problem of segregation in our schools. A member of the church of which the present writer is pastor, a man active in the city board of education, was appointed in 1979 to a commission to look into segregation in our elementary schools. Through him, the present writer has had access to the documents used in the study, as well as the final report, which will help to elucidate the place of Hispanics in our schools today. The District Advisory Committee on Desegregation received from the State Board of Education the following guidelines for the identification of segregated or isolated schools:

The local governing board is required by the regulations to consider five factors in determining whether a school is segregated; of course the board may consider such other factors as it considers relevant to the local circumstances. The required five factors are:

1. The number and percentages of each racial and ethnic group in each school compared with such data for the entire district. The board must also consider changes and trends in the ethnic enrollment over the preceding five years.
2. The racial and ethnic composition of the administrative, instructional and other certified and classified staff of each school. The board should consider the composition of each such group separately.
3. Attitudes of persons in the community and the administrators and district staff, regarding perceptions as to the "minority" status of each school.
4. The quality of buildings and equipment.
5. The organization of, and participation in, extracurricular activities by the various minority pupils attending such schools.²¹

After a thorough study, the committee arrived at important and serious conclusions, some of which are very pertinent to our study.

It is the conclusion of the Committee that racial and ethnic isolation exists in the Santa Paula schools in relation to the first three factors mentioned in the guidelines:

1. At this time approximately 67% of the kindergarten through 6th grade students in the Santa Paula School District are Hispanic (determined by Spanish surname). The Committee considers 15% above or below the District-wide percentage to be the greatest acceptable variation at each school. Glen City School with 50% Hispanic students, Blanchard with 51%, and Grace S. Thille with 90% are racially and ethnically isolated.

²¹ The District Advisory Committee on Desegregation, Santa Paula School District Report, Advisory Committee on Desegregation, Santa Paula, CA, July 12, 1979, p. 4.

Barbara Webster School with 81% Hispanic students and McKeveitt School with 82% are in danger of becoming racially and ethnically isolated.

2. In the Santa Paula School District as a whole, the administration is 28.5% Hispanic and 71.5% Anglo. The certificated teaching staff (kindergarten through 6th grade) is 8.75% hispanic, 90% Anglo, and 1.25% other. Neither group reflects the ethnic make-up of the student population (approximately 67% Hispanic, 32% Anglo, and 1% other), the certificated teaching staff being most divergent. There are 14 bilingual teachers (17.5% in grades kindergarten through 6th grade, 4 of whom have the bilingual/cross-cultural credential (5%). Approximately 20.9% of the students are classified as non-English-speaking (NES) or limited-English-speaking (LES) (Fall 1978 data). The ethnic make-up of the classroom aides is 81.5% Hispanic (within 15% variation from the student population percentage). The classified employees as a group (aides, clerical staff, custodians, cafeteria workers) are 54% Hispanic, 44.1% Anglo, and 1.4% other (within 15% variation).

3. The Committee concluded that general community opinion held Grace S. Thille, McKeveitt, and Barbara Webster School to be "minority schools."²²

The committee recognized the following factors that, in a way, remind us of the situation of Ernie in Los Angeles, indicating that "Ernies" can be found everywhere in Southern California. The Advisory Committee findings about scoring in the class-room were the following:

1. That a significant number of the low-scoring students entered the Santa Paula School District at a low level of achievement.
2. That a considerable number of the LES and NES students were transient and had received only part of their education in Santa Paula.
3. That economic conditions (i.e., poverty) strongly influence test scores.
4. That test content is not free of cultural bias; and
5. That the group labeled "Spanish-surname, not LES or NES" included some students who had recently passed from the LES classification and were not as fluent as children whose native language is English.²³

Religion

The Hispanic people are very religious. This heritage comes to them from both tributaries, the Iberian stream and the Mexican stream. As was said in the first chapter, the discovery of America and the conquest of Mexico were considered as religious events and both, Christopher Columbus and Cortés claimed that they were instruments in the hands of God serving His church. The Aztec, Mayan and Toltec Empires, were essentially theocracies. Their lives centered around their gods, and priests were held in high regard, along with their kings. For

²² District Advisory Committee, p. 7.

²³ District Advisory Committee, p. 8.

them there was no separation between the secular and the religious; all aspects of their life were touched by their gods and without them their lives were void and meaningless. Fr. Sahagún wrote extensively about Indian culture and translated a great deal from the Nahuatl. In the prologue of his sixth book, anticipating the incredulity that might greet his testimonies of the undoubted spirituality of the people they had come to convert, he wrote:

".... what is written down in this volume, no human being would have sufficient understanding to invent, nor could any living man contradict the language that therein is, so that if all the Indians who understand these things were questioned, they would affirm that this is the language proper to their ancestors and the works they did."²⁴

Now a good number of the descendants of these peoples live in America and continue to be a religious people, though entangled in the crosscurrents of modern living. According to the Catholic Bishops about thirty years ago the census estimated that there were 6 million Hispanics in the country, but in 1980 the census counted almost 15 million, not counting Puerto Ricans, the undocumented workers and the refugees from Cuba, Central and South America and from some of the other Caribbean islands. According to the bishops, the Hispanic population in this country is at least 20 million. They specify:

An accurate count of Hispanics has not yet taken place. As established successfully in court, the 1970 census undercounted Hispanics. Similar claims have been made regarding the 1980 figure. Estimates that include all of the populations cited in the text vary from 15 to 17 million. Our preference for 20 million accepts as likely the following: 14.6 million (1980 census) plus 3.2 million (population of Puerto Rico), plus 126,000 (Mariel boat-lift per USCC estimate), plus 1.9 million (1978 estimate of undocumented Hispanics), plus undercount for improperly identified non-Hispanics.²⁵

"La Opinión" published a good article on the religion of the Hispanics.²⁶ As is obvious, the Hispanics are predominantly Catholic whether in Spain, in Latin America or in the U.S.A. The Catholic church affirms that 90% of Hispanics in America identify themselves as Catholics, that is about 13 millions. In the Archdioceses of Los Angeles, which includes the counties of Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara the estimate is that there are more than 2

²⁴ Laurette Séjourné, Burning Water: Thought and Religion in Ancient Mexico (New York: Grove Press, 1960) p. 10.

²⁵ National Council of Catholic Bishops, p. 5 n.

²⁶ Julio Morán, "Religión," La Opinión (August 8, 1983) p. 1, passim.

million Hispanic Catholics. The article then describes what the church is facing at the present time in its work with the Hispanics.

The first thing mentioned is the great apathy for the church among the people. Of the numbers of Hispanics that claim to be Roman Catholic 80% are inactive or, as the article calls them, they are "lukewarm Catholics." They are married at the church and take their children to be baptized "as it should be," but they are not active in any way in the life of the church. One of the reasons mentioned for this situation is the lack of pastors. The situation is critical, especially in view of the fact that many of the pastors working with Hispanics are not fluent in Spanish. This situation has prevented the church from giving adequate instruction to the people and has created a feeling of mistrust and lack of interest in religious matters. According to the Catholic Secretariat for Hispanic Matters, only 1,485 of the 58,000 priests in the country are Hispanic. (This is less than 3%). And of these only 400 were born here.

Archbishop Patricio Flores, who in 1970 was consecrated as the first Mexican-American bishop, tells how, during the conquest of the Southwest by the United States during the XIX century, the Mexicans were forced to be part of a Catholic church which was predominantly Irish-American. Many of the Mexican priests were sent back to Mexico and replaced by Irish or German priests. Fr. Virgilio Elizondo, teacher and author, tells how in many of these churches there were signs saying: "The three last rows for the Mexicans." He adds: "From any rational point of view, the Hispanics should have abandoned the church."

Another reason for the lack of interest in the church according to this article is the rigidity and conservatism of the church. Juan Arzube, archbishop of Los Angeles archdiocese, says that the church used to tell the people what to do during worship, when to kneel, when to stand up, what responses to make and so forth. The mass was said in Latin and the drama of worship concentrated around the altar and was carried out by the clergy. After Vatican II things began to change, not only the language of the mass but, according to Robert Sánchez, Santa Fe archbishop, mass became more intimate and warm; people began to hug each other and to exchange the kiss of

peace. Also after Vatican II the church has been more and more involved in social matters, publicly supporting César Chávez and it is very active in the sanctuary movement for refugees.

At the present time there is a struggle going on between Catholics and Protestants. Many Catholics have left their traditional faith to embrace one of the forms of the Protestant Church. According to the Hispanic Secretariat of the Catholic Conference in the United States, in Washington, D.C., at the beginning of the seventies about 10% of the Catholics at the national level and about the 20% in the cities of great Hispanic population in the Southwest, like Los Angeles, were converted to other religious denominations. In a special survey at state level which included 568 Hispanics, 89% said that they were raised as Catholics and 7% as Protestants. Even so, 9% of those raised as Catholics said that they now practice a different religion, meaning that they are now Protestant. Another 8% said that they do not now practice any religion.

Some of the new Protestant converts said that they like the smaller congregations, they feel that they really belong to the church, and they appreciate the fact that their pastor is a Hispanic, able to communicate with them. Some also affirm that before they did things just because that was the custom or because they knew it was expected from them; now they do it because they feel it in their hearts and they pray and sing to express their new joy and hope.

Perhaps Arzube solves the problem of the relations between Catholics and Protestants in Southern California. He said, when he was asked his opinion about the Catholics leaving the church to become Protestants, "If he is a lukewarm Catholic that was not going to church, all right, let him receive the gospel there."

An interesting and powerful movement is sweeping both churches, Catholic and Protestant, the charismatic movement. Both churches have received the impact. Particularly the United Methodist Church is receiving the impact forcefully through the United Methodists for Church Renewal, but not everybody in these churches accepts the charismatics. The charismatic movement is officially recognized by Los Angeles Archdiocese, but not all the priests accept it. It can be affirmed that any plans for the future growth of the church have to recognize its presence and must to take it into account.

Chapter V

EVANGELIZING THE HISPANICS

The work of the church is to evangelize. This fact was made clear by Jesus himself:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.¹

The problem is not to know what the church is supposed to be doing for the order is clear: "Go and make disciples!" This is clearly a mandate to evangelize, but when we use that word, the problem becomes one of semantics because it is very difficult to define it to please everybody. In the materials distributed during the National School of Evangelism organized in February, 1979, by the Section on Evangelism of the Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church there is a list of twenty-four different definitions of evangelism, and the list could be expanded, adding the definitions that almost every author writing on the subject would offer.

But it is undeniable that the church in the present age is involved with new vigor in an evangelizing effort which has produced some dramatic results. From Constantine (313 A.D.) to Carey (1761-1834), the number of professing Christians in the world were only 8% of the world's population. Today the number is 28%. Following the steps of world explorers and sea travelers, beginning in the sixteenth century, Christianity has reached virtually every corner of the world.

But in our own century the growth has been astonishing indeed. Scott gives this information: at the beginning of this century sub-Saharan Africa was only 3.5% Christian, today the figure is 35%--a tenfold increase! Furthermore, missiologists predict that by the end of the century the majority of Africans south of the Sahara will be professing Christians.

¹ Mt. 28:18-20.

On one Sunday afternoon in Burma recently 6,215 new believers were baptized--twice as many as on the day of Pentecost. By the year 2000, there will be more non-white Christians than white for the first time in history and the center of gravity of Christianity will have shifted from north of the equator to the south. Worldwide, every week sixteen hundred new congregations--83,000 a year--come into existence.²

If to these facts, we add the impressive list of gatherings of Christians in recent years to think, reflect and strategize on the evangelistic mission of the church, we are also surprised. To mention only the major ones: the Synod of Rome in 1974, the Lausanne International Congress for World Evangelization in May, 1980 and the Conference on Strategy for World Evangelization in Pattaya, Thailand, in June of the same year. It is certainly possible to affirm with Dr. Mortimer Arias, "A Kairos for evangelization has arrived."³

Around 1950 the word evangelization began to be used for the propagation of the faith while evangelism was the term preferred by those who identified themselves with the stream known as evangelicalism. But it was John R. Mott who first used the word evangelization in the sense we know it now when he used it in his famous motto: "The evangelization of the world in this generation." On the other hand, it was in 1938, at the time of the Madras Missionary Conference, when the word evangelism came into general use, through its use in the writings and documents of that famous conference.⁴

The fact is that the preference of one word over the other does not solve the problem; in fact in our days both words are used interchangeably according to the preacher or the writer's preference. In recent years attention has been not so much on the choice of terms as on the process and impact of the work of evangelization, with a repeated emphasis on a holistic approach. In 1974, the Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia prepared a document on

² Waldron Scott, Bringing Forth Justice, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 13.

³ Mortimer Arias, "The Fourfold Crisis in Traditional Evangelism," Mimeographed Lecture. School of Theology at Claremont, 1981, p. 1.

⁴ Arias, p. 3.

Evangelism in Latin America Today, where the holistic approach is evident from its first paragraph:

Evangelism is the proclamation in the Spirit and in its biblical integrity of the good news of God's love manifested in Jesus Christ. This means:

- a) The **announcement** of the total saving message of Jesus Christ;
- b) The **denunciation** of all idols or powers which are opposed to God's purpose for mankind;
- c) The visible **witness**--collective and personal--to the Word which addresses, calls in question, transforms and makes man conscious;
- d) The **engaged participation** in the struggle for a more just and human society, inspired by the love of Christ;
- e) A **call** to men to be converted to Jesus Christ and to be incorporated here and now into his people.⁵

After offering this definition, the Bolivian Manifesto (as the document is also known) clarifies and expands on the meaning of the definition. Even though the whole document is important for the subject of this paper, three of its points especially throw light on what should be "true evangelism" among the Hispanics in Southern California. The first affirmation is:

True evangelism is **holistic**: the whole Gospel for the whole man and the whole of mankind. Evangelism addresses man in the totality of his being: individual and social, physical and spiritual, historical and eternal. We reject, therefore, all dichotomies, ancient and modern, which reduce the Gospel to one dimension or fragment man who has been created in the image and the likeness of God. We do not accept the idea that evangelism means only "saving souls" and seeking exclusively "a change in the eternal status of the individual"; these concepts are insufficient. We reject also the reduction of the Gospel to a program for service or social development or to a mere instrument of socio-political programmes.⁶

Evangelism, to be effective, should announce, denounce, witness, and call to the whole of man. This approach to the evangelization of the Hispanics of Southern California would be very effective and is much needed. The Guadalupe Riveras, the Rudys, the young people like Ernie, are waiting to hear the whole gospel applied to the whole of their lives. Their suffering, frustration and long subjugation prevent them from hearing a fragmented gospel but they would be ready to receive a gospel that answers their many questions and fulfills their deepest needs. A graft, to hold, needs to be wholly and deeply inserted into the trunk, otherwise it will not prosper.

⁵ "Evangelism in Latin America Today," A Monthly Letter About Evangelism, No. 2 (February, 1975) p. 3.

⁶ "Evangelism in Latin America," p. 3.

They need God not only when they go to church; they want to walk with Him in all the paths of their life; they want to find Him in their work, in their schools, in their family struggles, and celebrating with them in their *fiestas*. They are looking for a God for the whole of their lives.

The second affirmation is:

True evangelism is **biblical**. Its message is the apostolic proclamation (kerygma) attested in the New Testament and centered in Jesus Christ. Its focus is the call to repentance (metanoia), conversion and incorporation into the community of faith. Its final goal is the Kingdom of God, the biblical peace (shalom), the reconciliation of all men and all things in Jesus Christ. Consequently, evangelism is a permanent process in which we are all called in question and converted once and again, to God and our neighbor, a call in which there is place for renewal, reconciliation and growth and maturity in Christ.⁷

This aspect of evangelism is most needed among the Hispanics. For years the Bible has been an unknown book to many of them, or at least a closed book for them. The majority of them are **professing** Catholics, rather than **practicing** Catholics. For centuries the church kept the Bible out of the hands of the people, giving them the Word only through the catechesis of the church. This teaching was limited and restrictive leaving the people with feelings of emptiness, as could be seen in the previous chapter. But after Vatican II a new breeze was felt in the church. The Bible was opened to the people and the believer had direct access to it. This fact brought a new spirit to the church and the charismatic movement in no minor way got its impetus from the personal and direct study of the Word of God by individuals.

Another aspect should be mentioned along this line. For the first time in the history of the Hispanic world the works of Jeremias, von Rad, and others like them, are available in Spanish in direct translations, not through the English as many of the Protestant publications are. Until recently, it could truly be said of the Latin American church and of the Hispanics in America, that their church had a culture of manuals and pamphlets. And this change came about through the Roman Catholic publishing houses mainly in Spain, but also in some Latin American countries. The awakening to Bible studies in the Catholic Church became a blessing for the Protestant church

⁷ "Evangelism in Latin America," pp. 3-4.

as well. This production of scholarly literature in Spanish has benefitted not only the Roman Catholic Church but Protestant ones also.

The third affirmation is:

True evangelism is ~~incarnate~~: proclamation in words and deeds in a concrete situation. The Gospel is eternal, but not atemporal or ahistorical. It addresses itself to the whole man in his context. This does not mean that concrete historical situations are a part of the content of the Gospel. Evangelism must be inserted in this world and in the total experience of man; the latter must respond out of the depth of his historical existence. Man is not only the addressee but also an integral element in evangelism. Evangelism cannot, therefore, be reduced to a formula which can be uniformly applied to any situation or to the mere verbalism of evangelical propaganda.⁸

- The essence of this paragraph is in the words: "Evangelism must be inserted in this world and in the total experience of man." If this affirmation is translated or applied to the Hispanic community it would be possible to say: Evangelism, to be effective among the Hispanics, must be inserted in their world and in their total experience. This means that the evangelist should know their culture. The Lausanne Covenant states:

Missions have all too frequently exported with the gospel an alien culture, and churches have some times been in bondage to culture rather than to the Scripture. Christ's evangelists must humbly seek to empty themselves of all but their personal authenticity in order to become the servants of others, and churches must seek to transform and enrich culture, all for the glory of God.⁹

Orlando Costas makes these observations: the world which is claimed for the whole gospel is one of cultures, all its inhabitants are grouped together by family, linguistic, ideological, educational, religious, political, and economic ties. He affirms: "Culture is thus the result of human interaction." He points out: "Culture can be defined as the total set of values, norms, attitudes, and creations that distinguishes a people from another, that conforms their conceptions of time and determines their relationship with their living space."¹⁰

⁸ "Evangelism in Latin America," p. 4.

⁹ Alfred C. Krass, Evangelizing Neopagan North America, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1982), p. 194.

¹⁰ Orlando E. Costas, Christ Outside the Gate (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1982), p. 165.

Applying this definition to evangelism and the evangelist it is easy to see that the task of communicating the gospel is not an easy one, but requires dedication, perseverance and the emptying of oneself on behalf of those to be evangelized, in the present case, the Hispanics. The Catholic Bishops discovered this during their National Conference in 1983 when they declared:

Respect for culture is rooted in the dignity of people made in God's image. The Church shows its esteem for this dignity by working to ensure that pluralism, not assimilation and uniformity, is the guiding principle in the life of communities in both the ecclesial and secular societies. All of us in the Church should broaden the embrace with which we greet our Hispanic brothers and sisters and deepen our commitment to them.¹¹

A way to implement these points would be to apply Segundo's hermeneutic circle to the task of evangelism. Luis Segundo defines his circle in these words:

It is the continuing change in our interpretation of the Bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal. "Hermeneutic" means "having to do with interpretation." And the circular nature of this interpretation stems from the fact that each new reality obliges us to interpret the word of God afresh, to change reality accordingly, and then go back and reinterpret the word of God again, and so on.¹²

This circle helps us to keep our eyes on the Scriptures while we assess our knowledge and understanding of the Hispanic people. Nobody can have a full knowledge of all Hispanics all the time. Their social conditions change, their ideals and goals in life change, their religious views change. All this happens because they do not live in isolation but in the milieu of a constantly changing world where peoples and individuals are always in transformation. This is the reason why it is necessary to keep constantly aware of our biblical and theological views in relation to our evangelization; we need to be sure that we are communicating the gospel and that can be accomplished only when we know the Scriptures and the people we are dealing with.

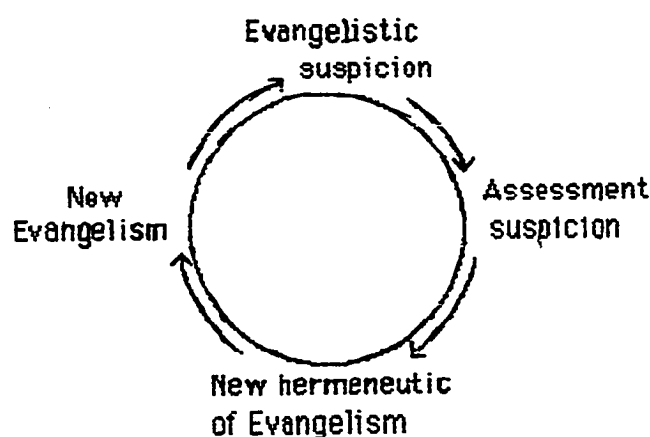
¹¹ National Conference of Catholic Bishops, The Hispanic Presence, Challenge and Commitment (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1984), p. 5. See also Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds., Perspectives on the World Christian Movement (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1981). The third part of this book is devoted to "The Cultural Perspective," beginning with a discussion of "Culture" in general, then: "Cross-Cultural Communication," ending this part with the discussion of "Gospel and Culture." The whole book is made up of a series of essays.

¹² Juan Luis Segundo, The Liberation of Theology (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1976), p. 8.

Segundo explains that there are two preconditions for using the circle properly; these are: 1. To have profound and enriching questions and suspicions about our real situation; 2. A new interpretation of the Bible that is equally profound and enriching. These preconditions should be applied to the evangelization of the Hispanic people in Southern California, as Segundo suggests, by honestly looking for answers in those areas where the evangelist wants to work but about which he has the suspicion that he does not have enough knowledge. After meeting that condition, the evangelist should check his answers with the Bible to see if they had been interpreted correctly and to discover new ways and methods that should be applied to the new situation. Segundo adds that there are four decisive factors in the circle:

Firstly there is our way of experiencing reality, which leads us to ideological suspicion. *Secondly* there is the application of our ideological suspicion to the whole ideological superstructure in general and to theology in particular. *Thirdly* there comes a new way of experiencing theological reality that leads us to exegetical suspicion, that is, to the suspicion that the prevailing interpretation of the Bible has not taken important pieces of data into account. *Fourthly* we have our new hermeneutic, that is, our new way of interpreting the fountainhead of our faith (i.e., Scripture) with the new elements at our disposal.¹³

The hermeneutic circle would help to keep the evangelizer honest with himself, with the people he wants to evangelize and with the Bible, the source of all evangelization. This is the way the *Evangelization circle* would look:



¹³ Segundo, p. 9.

Here we can see that the evangelization of the Hispanics begins with the serious suspicion that the conditions in their communities are such that they demand the gospel be announced to them. This suspicion could be understood as a call to the work of an evangelist; it is an awareness that there is a job to be done and that it is waiting for someone to do it. This suspicion involves also the daring to take up the job, like Isaiah saying: "Here am I, send me," being ready to take the risks. This is commitment to work for the Hispanics.

This moves the evangelizer to the second step, to recognize that he is not ready for the task yet; he might be seriously committed but he might lack the **knowledge** of the culture of the people he intends to work with and of the places where he is going to be working. These could be prosperous or poor communities, they could be the *barrios* or metropolitan areas, they could be rural or urban situations, but the suspicion should be that something is wrong in them and demanding the presence of the gospel, and the evangelizer should be willing to learn all he can in order to be able to fulfill his call. The suspicion could also include the idea that, even though some evangelization is going on, the **methods** used are not adequate, so the results are poor. Another suspicion might be that the **solutions** offered are not responding to the needs of the people or, a very important suspicion, that the evangelizer himself is not **equipped** spiritually, culturally, or psychologically for the task.

This reflection and confrontation should bring the evangelizer to the third step in the circle, the new hermeneutic of evangelism, because it puts the Bible and himself in right relation to the community he is planning to serve. This could be a painful exercise, but one that cannot be avoided because it is the only way to arrive at the new hermeneutic of evangelism. This hermeneutic involves, then, the Bible, the community to be evangelized, and the evangelizer; only when these three are together can evangelization be effective.

This takes the evangelizer to the fourth step in the circle, the new evangelism. The evangelizer will put into practice the results of his reflection and his new hermeneutic of evangelism; he will work and check whether his new assessment has been correct and while toiling with enthusiasm and faith he will discover that some of his observations were correct but that

some of the methods were wrong, that even if he has enjoyed some success in some areas, in others he has failed. So, the serious, earnest and honest evangelizer starts the circle again with a new evangelistic suspicion.

This is the importance of the *evangelization circle*; it keeps the evangelizer in constant contact with the group that he is trying to reach, with the Bible which contains the message and the Person that he is trying to communicate, at the same time serving as his guide in his life and work. This quadruple assessment is facilitated by following the circle; if any of the steps are missing the circle is broken and the results will be unsatisfactory.

Perhaps some practical examples could help to see the circle in operation and would suggest some ways it would help to reach the Hispanics.

The basic Christian communities

These groups are also called *basic ecclesial communities* and, since their beginning in 1956, have been proliferating in South America at an astonishing rate. Their impact on the life of the church has been so great that Leonardo Boff, the Brazilian priest, affirms that, without a doubt, the basic Christian communities are at the present time one of the great movements for the renewal of the church in the world.¹⁴

It all started with the testimony and complaint of a little old lady to her bishop, Dom Angelo Rossi, of Brazil: "In Natal the three Protestant churches are lit up and crowded. We hear their hymns and our Catholic church is in darkness because we don't have a priest." The bishop received the information and a question formed in his mind and heart: Does the church have to stop just because there are not enough priests? Dom Angelo mobilized 372 community coordinators to do all that a lay person can do within the discipline of the church, as catechists to gather the people once a week to teach them and to pray with them; on Sundays and holy days to call the people to celebrate the "Sunday without mass" or a "mass without a priest" or the "catholic

¹⁴ Leonardo Boff, *Eclesiogenesis* (Santander: Editorial Sal Terrae, 1980), p. 14.

worship." All the coordinators guide the people, spiritually and collectively, to follow the steps of the mass that the priest is celebrating in the distant mother church.

These groups grew into small communities around a catechist that was responsible of their spiritual well being; instead of chapels, meeting halls were built to serve as school, church and workshop, where the women learned sewing and other industries, and where the people met to solve community problems. When the people responded so well to this initiative, radio schools were organized to teach the people how to read and to instruct them on health matters and sanitation. Sundays, the community (without a priest) would meet around a radio, listening to the mass and preaching by the bishop. By 1963 there were already 1,410 radio schools, and the movement was still growing.

After some struggles and failures, the Christian base communities were accepted as a real solution to the problem of the lack of priests and the need to reach the people, especially those in the rural areas and the slums of the cities. By 1974 there were 40,000 communities in Brazil, and by 1978 it was estimated that the number was 50,000; one year later Time Magazine gave the figure of 80,000 as the total number of the communities in Brazil. But the reality is that it is difficult to know the exact number of the communities because, as somebody has said, "They multiply so rapidly that it is impossible to keep an accurate account."¹⁵

As has already been mentioned the groups are small, ten or twelve people in each one, and their organization is very simple. The leader, teacher, or convener, is the person around whom the community rallies and with whom the community works. Each member is responsible to each other, the fraternity and fellowship is deep, and the assistance and upholding of each other is at the center of their relationship. They keep the Gospels as the center of their study and reflection and they look upon each other as equals. In the Christian communities there are no hierarchies and no by-laws or rules to be followed; the small group lives very much as a family,

¹⁵ This information about the Basic Christian Communities has been taken from: William Cook, "The Expectation of the Poor: A Protestant Missiological Study of the Catholic 'Comunidades de Base' in Brazil" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1982), pp. 167-181; and Boff, pp. 13-14.

solving the problems as they present themselves, in all being inspired by the spirit of the Gospels.¹⁶

Boff has these words:

The ecclesial basic community, if it wants to keep its communal spirit, should never try to take the place of the parish; it should keep being small to avoid bureaucratization and to facilitate the face to face encounter of its members; it should be open to the communion of the Church and its institutions and organizations, while keeping itself in dialectical tension with her to avoid being absorbed into her. This way it won't become a futuristic and fanatic group, nor retrograde or obsolete, but it will stand as a constant ferment to the whole Church.¹⁷

The communities as models for the evangelizing of the Hispanics

It would be a disaster to try to force an exact copy of the base communities upon the Southern California scene. They are producing great results in Latin America because they are responding to the need of the people living in those areas. The evangelizer in our own area needs to discover how this model can help in the task of reaching the Hispanics with the Gospel. Not everything applies here and some aspects of the communities could even be divisive.

Dangers to be avoided. The first danger to be pointed out would be the imitation of their particular political outlook. Here the word political is not used in a pejorative sense but care should be taken to avoid possible pitfalls. Most of the communities are engaged in a study of the Bible that has its roots deep in the particular needs of the Latin American people and it is geared to solving their particular needs. Studying the development of these groups it is understandable that they are, consciously or not, engaged in liberation work. They are looking for the answer to their problems of poverty, injustice, and inequality and their findings take them

¹⁶ Boff, p. 15.

¹⁷ Boff, p. 20.

into action along these lines. In some countries, like Brazil, they are such a real political force that some politicians would like to see them allied with their parties.

In Southern California it is necessary to find the issues that call for Biblical study and action here. No doubt in some areas, where the South Americans and Central Americans are a predominant group the liberation subjects should be considered, but always in the context of the situation and conditions in which they are living now; it would be a big mistake to try to transplant the political situations south of the border to the area under consideration. Another area where the liberation themes should apply would be in the areas where the farm workers live and work, but the essential thing is to keep always the context in mind. Perhaps the study of the Bible would lead to some action, even political action, but this should always be within the text (the Bible) and the context (present social and cultural conditions) of the group.

Another aspect of the basic Christian communities that should be avoided is their tendency to identify the Gospel with the poor. This is something that they cannot help but in Southern California the situation is completely different. While some Hispanics in this area are certainly poor, there are also the well-established middle class people, like the examples that were mentioned in the "Demographic Profile", who even though they were field workers when they were young, like Rudy and Ofelia, now they are managers of stores, bank employees, or entrepreneurs. The content of the Bible should be applied to the context in which the people live.

Finally, it is very important, as Boff has pointed out, not to try to substitute the communities for the church. The success of the groups, the warm feelings within the groups, could create the impression that they should take the place of the church, when in reality, they should keep on being an arm or prolongation of the church into the larger community she is serving. The pastor and the members of the mother church should always be in close contact with the basic Christian community, which should always be under the umbrella of the mother church.

Applying the model to the California-Pacific Conference

As in the case of Brazil, the basic Christian communities will be born only through the efforts and initiative of the authorities of the church and, in the last analysis, through the efforts of the local pastor and the local congregation. Perhaps they will be born here with a different name and for a different purpose than in South America, but they could be a blessing to the churches and the Hispanic communities; perhaps they would be called "family groups", or the traditional name "Bible study groups", but the name is not important; the important thing is that these groups should be used to reach the people who now are not being reached with the Gospel; for this reason the organization of the groups should be very intentional: to reach the people with the Gospel.

The concern could arise in the administrative council, or in the committee on evangelism, but, under any circumstance, it should be on the heart and mind of the pastor. The church should start, following the evangelization circle, by discovering that the church has failed to reach the Hispanics, which is the first suspicion. The realization that the Hispanic people are all around the church, many of them without any church connection, would move them to the second step.

The second step should be to lead the people of the church to a study of their community: What is the social condition of the people they are planning to serve? Are they workers? Farmers? From South or Central America? Old immigrants? New immigrants? Are they Mexican-Americans (born in the United States)? All these are important questions that should be answered before starting the organization of the communities. Another aspect to be considered at this point is the way the new group is to be organized. Who is going to be the leader? Where are they going to meet? How frequently?

When the evangelizer knows the people he is going to work with, and when he has the right method for the task, he is ready to plunge into the work of starting the new basic

Christian community. In this *new hermeneutic of evangelism* he will always hold the three elements together, the people, the Bible, and himself as the leader.

The last step consists in the excitement of putting the ideas and findings into operation. The new group will be launched, perhaps by one or two members of the church inviting some of their friends for a meeting in their home; or perhaps in studying the community, it was discovered that there was a group of Salvadorans that were ready to meet to talk about their situation in this country and to receive help along the way. The possibilities are many, but the essential thing is that it should always be kept in mind that the Bible should be relevant to the groups' needs and that the leader should always be aware of them. The basic Christian communities grow from within, the people themselves, and this characteristic should be constantly in the mind of the leader.

After some time and work with the group the evangelizer should be able to ask himself whether his suspicions were right? Did he choose the right method? Is he using the Bible in the right way? Is he accepting the culture of the people in his dealings with them? Are some areas important for the people that he has not touched, or that he does not know enough about so he cannot work adequately on them? After this time working with the group, does the leader find that he is becoming spiritually and psychologically fitted for the task?

With this new suspicion the evangelizer goes back to the first step in the evangelization circle for a new assessment and reflection. This is an important aspect of the circle and in the work of the groups, or for the work of evangelism in general, for that matter. The evangelizer should never consider that he has the perfect method or the perfect group, and that he has all the knowledge that he needs for his work. This periodic evaluation will make for healthy groups, adequate methods, and spiritually healthy evangelizers. Boff shows how the groups experience transcendence transcends culture and politics:

The communities prove that it is possible to be a Christian without being conservative; a man of faith at the same time one is engaged in social issues; that is possible to hope against hope and to

dream about eternity without taking our feet from solid ground and without losing sight of the struggle for a better morning, even here, within our history.¹⁸

Adelante

Adelante, meaning Forward in English, was organized by the Pico Rivera United Methodist Church, under the leadership of its pastor, the Rev. Dr. Fernando Santillana, in October of 1984.¹⁹ It all began with a year-long study of the Pico-Union area of Los Angeles where it was discovered that there were a great number of Central Americans and no United Methodist Church to help them. There is a Lutheran Church and several short-lived Pentecostal churches which are organized and then, after three or four months disappear. After one year of study and analysis, and with some help from the Annual Conference, the work was begun.

The first step was to rent a place to serve as headquarters and to furnish it as best they could with a few chairs and tables. From the very beginning the work was identified as United Methodist in a very intentional way and as a religious organization. The idea is to evangelize but not in the traditional way; the members of the Pico Rivera church went there to help the people and through their work and testimony they hope that some people will be reached with the Gospel. They went to help, but they did not organize a social center, they do not distribute food or clothing, they organized their work around the needs of the people.

The people of Adelante discovered that there was some help available for the adults through some other organizations in the area, but no help for children, so they decided to start there. Tutoring groups were organized to help children with their home work. Their parents could not help them because they could not speak English and, in many cases, they could not read even in Spanish. The groups work from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. serving children seven to twelve years old.

¹⁸ Boff, p. 73.

¹⁹ All the information about Adelante was gathered in a personal interview with Dr. Santillana held at Adelante, on September 27, 1985.

During Christmas the children prepared a Christmas program and invited their parents, so they got acquainted with Adelante.

Now there is a Mothers' Cl which according to Santillana's expression "is just another United Methodist Women's Group" but with definite social action inclinations. For instance, at a particular street crossing their children could see some drug pushers offering cocaine and marijuana openly to the passers-by and the mothers were very upset because the police were doing nothing to stop it. After some study and consideration they were able to move the police to action and the pushers went away. They have also moved the city to clean their streets and to pick up their trash. In all this it is important to note that they have been able to find ways to accomplish this even though they are undocumented people. For the Adelante people the important thing is not only the fact that the group has won some battles but that the mothers now can see that they can do things and that their voice can be heard.

At the present time the program of Adelante includes these adult groups: three to study English as a second language; a group of Spanish as second language, attended by some nuns and Anglos; one organized by the Post Office, to prepare people to take the test to work in the Post Office, because they need Spanish-speaking people; a theatre group; a sewing group; a literacy group in Spanish; a weekly Bible study group; and a religious service every Sunday afternoon.

Santillana is quick to clarify that everything is free and with a clear religious emphasis. The only place where something is charged is in the sewing class; if the students decide to sell some of their products; then 25% of the money is kept for Adelante. Also there is a voluntary offering during the services. There is something interesting about these services; to avoid confusion with the mass and with the term "service" that many do not understand, they are called *Celebration of the Word*. They are attended by an average of 30 people, but once a month the number is greater and there are even people standing for lack of chairs. This is because, once a month they "remember the martyrs" in a special service of preaching and communion. A Roman Catholic priest comes to officiate, along with Santillana. Part of the service follows the United Methodist tradition and part the Roman Catholic tradition. It is interesting to note that there is

full communion between priest, pastor and congregation, which the present writer considers unusual. In this service the life of Bishop Oscar Romero is memorialized, along with any recent deaths in the congregation.

The Bible study is called *Reflection on the Word* and involves the participation of a group of ten or twelve. There is no special "teacher" as such, but Santillana introduces the subject and then everybody participates, putting together the Biblical passage and their particular concerns. Sometimes their observations are striking, like the time when they were discussing a subject where Herod the Great was mentioned and described and one of the group exclaimed: "Now Herod is called Napoleón Duarte!" Some of the people have been in basic Christian communities in El Salvador which facilitates their participation in their new group here.

Last August they stopped all programs for two weeks to evaluate the work. They considered all the groups and classes and new methods were introduced; new text books were chosen and in some cases a new way was devised to divide the groups. After the two weeks a feeling that things were improved was prevalent and the directors and the leaders of Adelante were ready for a new cycle.

Adelante is a good model for reaching the Hispanics within the California-Pacific Conference; in some ways it could be definitely considered as a basic Christian Community; in some other ways it could be considered as a social center; and in some aspects could be considered as store front evangelism, but actually it is not any of these and at the same time is all of them combined in a unique way to serve the community. Here is the text and context of Hispanic evangelization expressed in the way a congregation found most meaningful for a particular area in Los Angeles. We can see the evangelization circle in operation: The Pico Rivera congregation had a suspicion that in the Pico-Union area there was a group of Hispanics with a particular need and they went to find out whether that was so. They studied the area, devised the best methods and started to work. After some time they stopped to reflect and evaluate the work done because they had the suspicion that the work could be improved and that some of the methods were not the best

for the job. After this time of evaluation they started a new cycle that, no doubt, will take Adelante through many cycles.

A Hispanic District in the California-Pacific Conference

As was shown in Chapter II, the merger of the Hispanic work of the conference into the work of the Anglo Annual Conference did not produce the results that were hoped for; there are fewer churches now and membership in them is falling also. If these facts are considered against the growing number of Hispanics in the area where the conference has responsibility they should produce serious considerations in the minds of United Methodist people.

Even though the experiment known as "integration" failed, there is still a group of Hispanic churches within the conference, led by a group of pastors that want to do their job in the best possible way. If the churches are not growing now, that does not mean that they could not grow in the future, but it is necessary to find new ways to bring new power and a new vision to them. The present writer has the suspicion that the solution could be in the formation of an Hispanic District of the California-Pacific Conference. This would bring certain dynamics into operation in the Hispanic churches, as will be explained later.

An Hispanic District in the Conference would give Hispanic churches greater control over their own affairs. In a personal interview, Clifton L. Holland²⁰ made clear that to reach the Hispanics three things are necessary: First, good relations between Hispanics and Anglos. This is especially important where the Hispanic congregation is worshiping and working in the facilities of an Anglo group. Nobody wants to belong to a group that is in constant ethnic friction, or where there is no freedom to express their faith according to their particular cultural

²⁰ The interview was held on September 26, 1985. Mr Holland is the author of the book The Religious Dimension in Hispanic Los Angeles (South Pasadena, William Carey Library, 1974). At the present time he is working on his dissertation for the Ph.D. degree at Fuller Theological Seminary. He is also a member of several groups and organizations working for the evangelization of the Hispanics. Since 1972 he has been a missionary with the Latin American Mission in San José, Costa Rica, where he is on the staff of the Institute of In-Depth Evangelism.

patterns. This freedom is what the Roman Catholics have been discovering in their churches since Vatican II and it should be preserved and augmented in United Methodist congregations.

A second element in successful work with the Hispanics is a solid Hispanic structure. This means that the work, the decision-making, the planning and execution of the planning, should be in the hands of the Hispanics. It is necessary to avoid at all costs the paternalism of the time of Dr. Vernon M. McCombs. Explaining his point, Holland referred to the Assemblies of God and the Baptist churches that both have Hispanic conferences that are growing at the present time.

The third element, according to Holland, is that any Hispanic work should have a strategy that is thoroughly Hispanic. The work should be intentionally and decisively Hispanic in orientation and it should be germane to their culture. At the same time there should be a policy of mutual understanding and cooperation.

Advantages of the Hispanic District

The advantages of the Hispanic District could be multiple: The different programs of the churches, such as Christian education, evangelization, stewardship and worship, could be carried out in what could be called the "Hispanic way," that is to say, within the Hispanic culture. So far, the help from the conference in the life of the Hispanic churches is minimal and when the Hispanic leaders attend the Anglo workshops and retreats they find the ideas difficult to translate into the life of the Hispanic church. The formation of the new district would also help in the development of new leadership for the Hispanic churches and for the conference in general. One of the main goals should be the establishment of new churches and the growth of those already in existence. Finally, the new district would allow reflexion in relation with the program and goals of the Hispanic church. At this point the evangelizing circle would be a helpful device.

Implementation

The implementation of this idea would require the appointment by the bishop of an Hispanic elder to the district superintendency. The district should be at par with the rest of the districts regarding representation in the cabinet, funding, and full participation in the general program of the conference. This is important because this would give the district superintendent status in the conference and also within the Hispanic churches. The district would carry all the programs of the Hispanic churches, which means that the district would be accountable to the conference the same as the other districts.

At the present time the brown caucus known as LAMAG (an acronym for Latin American Methodist Action Group) is the vehicle for expression of the Hispanic church in the California-Pacific Conference and the organism that represents her nationally. This has been the case for several years now, but the present writer feels that the time has come for a change and that the Hispanic District very well could take its place. During all these years LAMAG has served very well, especially during its first years, when it was important that the voice of the Hispanics be heard at the conference and national levels; its first leader did a good job in this respect and gained for the Hispanics of the conference visibility and a level of participation in conference affairs that they had not enjoyed till then. But now, even though there are funds available and the need for programming in different levels is evident in the churches, LAMAG has proved not to be as effective as it might be it, the new district could take over at this point, with due recognition for the road that LAMAG has paved.

What would be the boundaries of this new district? The new Hispanic district would encompass all the Hispanic churches within the conference, regardless of the district in which they occur. The district would cover from Santa Paula to San Ysidro, on the border with Mexico, and from Pasadena to Santa Ana; its borders would be irregular and at the present time the number of churches within the district would be fewer than the number in the other districts, but, at the beginning this would allow the district superintendent and the pastors of the churches

to give more time to planning and implementing programs of revivification for the local churches and the whole district.

At this point it is helpful to quote the Discipline of the church regarding the role of the district superintendent. Part of ¶ 501 reads as follows:

Those who superintend carry primary responsibility for ordering the life of the Church. It is their task to enable the gathered Church to worship and to *evangelize* faithfully. *It is also their task to facilitate the initiation of structures and strategies for the equipping of Christian people for service in the Church and in the world in the name of Jesus Christ and to help extend the service in mission.* It is their task, as well, to see that all matters, temporal and spiritual, are administered in a manner which acknowledges the ways and the insights of the world critically and with understanding while remaining cognizant of and faithful to the mandate of the church. The formal leadership in the United Methodist Church, located in these superintending offices, is an integral part of the system of an itinerant ministry.²¹

The district superintendent in the United Methodist Church is supposed to be a leader in the work of evangelism, equipping the churches in this work. For the district superintendent in the Hispanic District this should be the paramount task on his agenda. Christian Basic Communities and Adelante were mentioned as models that can be followed but, undoubtedly, in the actual experience of working with the churches new models and methods would be found. In any case, the text and context of evangelization should always be kept in mind; this means that the evangelizing circle should be always in operation.

Many Hispanics are flying in circles, like the eagle of the parable in Chapter IV, looking for a place to rest. Many of them are looking for the spiritual rest that the United Methodist Church could offer. To bring the people out of their faith in the Creole Christ, a powerless and lifeless Christ, is a major undertaking, nothing short of a cultural and religious revolution, and the Hispanic District could very well spearhead it.

²¹ The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1984) p. 249. Emphasis added.

CONCLUSIONS

1. All the Hispanics in America, with the exception of the Portuguese-speaking, have the same ancestry. Perhaps they have in their veins the blood of different Indian groups, or maybe they are mixed with some other European ethnic family, but the common denominator is that all of them, one way or another, have Spanish blood in their veins. Thus it is evident that all Hispanics living in America have a common culture and form a family, even though with particular tints or peculiarities according to the countries from which they came. This common culture make the Hispanics a single target for evangelization and presents a challenge to the California-Pacific Conference.

2. The Methodist Church began working with the Hispanics in earnest with the formation of the Latin American Mission in 1920. As the documents of the church show, there was a period of expansion and growth, but with the integration of the Hispanic work directly into the annual conference, a decrease has been experienced in the number and vitality of the churches. Perhaps the reasons behind the actions of the conference were many and sound, but the experiment failed, which is no reason for not working with the Hispanics outside the churches, because if the Hispanics inside the churches are diminishing in number, outside of them they are growing at an astonishing rate. This is not a time to give up but to reconsider and evaluate the work done and to try new methods with new enthusiasm.

3. In the definition of evangelism of the Lausanne Covenant it is explained that "evangelism itself is the *proclamation* of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to *persuading* people to *come to him* personally and to be *reconciled to God*."¹ This remark makes clear that the task of evangelization includes proclamation, persuasion, and invitation, in order to bring the people to God. But this task is not confined to a particular culture or country but goes beyond its boundaries. Holland affirms that

¹ Alfred C. Krass, Evangelizing Neopagan North America (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1982), p. 191. Emphasis added.

the ministry to the Hispanics has to take into consideration the *needs* of the Hispanic people one wants to serve. Culture shouldn't be an obstacle. The people should be served in the language they feel more comfortable, Spanish or English, either in monolingual services or in bilingual services. The music used could be the traditional or contemporary *Anglo* music, or some ethnic music. The main thing is that our work with any ethnic group should be contextualized and relevant.²

Arreguín expresses the same idea, that language is not the primary consideration, noting that there are several Hispanic Baptist churches in the Los Angeles area that carry on their work completely in English.³ It is interesting that these two experts affirm that the most important thing is not to preserve a culture but to bring the persons to Christ.

The evangelizer should be open and ready to serve people in the language in which they can be more readily brought to God. Both Arreguín and Holland affirm that culture could be dear to the evangelizer but the all-important priority is the Gospel.

4. The Hispanics in the United States have in their minds and hearts, as their religious heritage, the Creole Christ, the result of the Moors' cultural impact on Spain during their domination of that country which, religiously, produced what has been called in this dissertation "the Spanish Christ." As has been explained, the Creole Christ is the result of the impact of the Spanish culture on the Indian culture of Mexico during the conquest of Mexico by Spain. The fact is that both "Christs" are "cadaver Christs," because faith is centered in a Christ that suffers and dies, and stays in the tomb as opposed to rising again in a glorious resurrection triumphing over death. That Christ is a dead Christ covered with gobs of blood, immobile, and lifeless.

The work of the evangelizer is to bring to these people **the Christ of the gospels**, the Christ they have never known. The Christ that grew up in Palestine, that lived in Galilee, the Christ that preached, taught, and performed miracles. The Christ between Christmas

² Interview with Clifton L. Holland, September 26, 1985.

³ Interview with Dr. José Arreguín, Hispanic Department, Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, Calif., September 26, 1985.

APPENDIX

A PROPOSAL FOR HISPANIC MINISTRY IN THE CALIFORNIA PACIFIC CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

(Presented by LAMAG, the Conference Hispanic Caucus)

I. The Challenge and the Need

The ministry of the United Methodist Church among Hispanic people in the Southern California region has a long history with many lessons to be learned from the experience. We must apply these lessons to the present situation as we in the newly established California-Pacific Annual Conference look for ways of enhancing this ministry and making it more effective.

Because of the most recent wave of immigration into the Southern California region from Mexico, Central American countries, and other countries of Latin America, and because of the phenomenal growth of the Hispanic population through record-setting natural increase, most of the religious groups in Southern California are now making this group the highest priority for outreach.

We believe that Methodism as an expression of the Christian faith has much to offer Hispanic people. It is obvious that practically all Hispanics come from a cultural and religious tradition in Roman Catholicism. We acknowledge that the Roman Catholic Church in Southern California is seeking to minister to Hispanics in new and creative ways. However, many Hispanics are increasingly open to other alternatives of Christian faith and expression in the religiously and culturally pluralistic environment in which we live. The United Methodist alternative can be a helpful and fulfilling one for many Hispanics as it is for many of us. It is also true that for many Hispanics, the denominational differences which we in the United States have stressed and have allowed to divide us are not so important. This is also an appropriate time for us to find bold and risk-taking ways of ministering to Hispanics given the fact of the general church's quadrennial missional priority, "Developing and Strengthening the Ethnic Minority Local Church for Witness and Mission."

It is a spirit of genuine concern that we share with many United Methodists the contrast between the phenomenal growth of the Hispanic population in the Southern California

Area and the decline in the number of Hispanic United Methodist churches and congregations over the last several decades.

We also wish to refer to the recently published document, "The Hispanic Vision for the Third Century of Methodism," published by MARCHA, the National Hispanic Caucus where it is stated that the Western Jurisdiction of the UMC has the largest Hispanic population of all the six jurisdictions (6,252,045) and that in Metropolitan Los Angeles, the 2.065 million Hispanic population is the largest Mexican population after Mexico City. It is also recommended that "structures within the United Methodist Church need to be adapted so as to facilitate and promote the missions and ministry of the Church among Hispanics." (Page 5)

We wish now to look primarily to the future with hope and with confidence as we present the following proposal for ministry to Hispanics in the new California-Pacific Annual Conference:

1. That a new district be organized, in addition to the present eight, to be made up of the Hispanic churches and congregations of the conference, and of churches and congregations located in communities where there is a numerical majority of Hispanic population.
2. The new district superintendent shall be a Hispanic minister and function in the cabinet as all the other superintendents.
3. The new district shall be in operation for an initial six year period after which evaluation shall determine whether it is to continue or change.
4. There shall be provided adequate staffing for the operation of this district.
Examples of such staffing is as follows:
 - a. Associate program staff persons in stewardship and finance and in Christian Education.
5. There shall be adequate financing of this new district.
6. All of the organizational structures and support for the new district shall be put in place as for any new district organized in the traditional manner.

II. Responsibilities and Tasks of this New District Office and Team for Hispanic Ministry

The responsibilities and tasks of this team will be along the lines of the Objectives of the Missional Priority of the United Methodist Church for the quadrennium 1985-88 (Developing and Strengthening the Ethnic Minority Local Church for Witness and Mission) but with specific emphasis on areas that are critical for the development of Hispanic Ministries in OUR Conference. These areas are:

1. The establishment and development of new Hispanic congregations;
2. Strengthening of existing Hispanic congregations;
3. A strong and aggressive program for the recruitment of clergy for Hispanic churches and ministries;
4. An intentional effort to work with churches in transition (churches which communities are changing to Hispanic);
5. The starting of new Outreach Programs that will cater to the needs of Hispanic communities.

We propose to reach these goals by:

A. Starting new Hispanic congregations using the Home-Churches model.

This could be done with the intention of developing new Hispanic congregations where there are none and that, given the populations tracts and census, are highly concentrated Hispanic communities where the possibilities of success are high. We suggest this model be used to "test the waters". We have set a goal of at least six (6) new churches by 1992.

B. The use of existing United Methodist facilities to foster the organization of Bible Study groups, Vacation Bible Schools or worship meetings that could eventually develop into new Hispanic congregations. This effort need to be directed mainly to churches in transition. The new group will not necessarily be a part of the existing church but will search for the options that will better express their own vision of their ministry and purpose in the community. Our goal of new Hispanic congregations out of transitional situations is at least twelve (12) for the six year duration of this program.

C. The reaching out to the poor and the powerless in their own situation in the barrio. The immediate goal of this approach is to be a witness about the liberation and justice that are basic principles in the biblical testimony. This could be done by using the model of the base ecclesial communities (comunidades eclesiales de base) that have been very successful in Hispanic countries all over our hemisphere and that appeal to the poor people here in the United States also. (An example of this is the establishment of the "Centro Adelante" here in Los Angeles and a similar project in Washington, D. C.).

D. The development and training of our lay and clergy leadership is a very important part of this program. To that effect we propose the establishment of a permanent Training Center that will make it a priority to provide the necessary training so that ministry in our Hispanic churches be done in an organized and appropriate way. Among the first responsibilities for this team of trainers are:

- 1) Conducting vigorous and extensive training in Evangelization (both theologically and methodologically). The extensive studies of Dr. Mortimer Aries need to be incorporated in this process as also the Comprehensive Plan For Evangelism (adapted to an Hispanic context...).

- 2) The preparation and implementation of a Guide and Plan for Integral Stewardship in Hispanic churches with the expressed and intentional goal of self-support. We need to get our churches out of the dependency syndrome, foster own dignity, and ownership of their buildings and programs. We expect this team to reach the goal of 12 churches becoming self-supported by the end of the initial duration of this program (1986-92). Existing stewardship guides in Puerto Rico and Rio Grande Annual Conferences, geared specifically to Hispanics, could be obtained and implemented here. In addition to this we could use methods like those provided by the Office of Finance and Field Service, Hispanic Field Staff, of the Board of Discipleship.

The participation of Hispanic churches in district and conference training events is usually very limited due to the fact that both the language and culture are absent from these

events. We propose that the training be done within our cultural perspective and that both Spanish and English be used as necessary. The Ministry Team will have the responsibility of conducting these training events and to find appropriate trainers and consultants where particular expertise might be needed.

3) Provide orientation and training to pastors that come from other parts of the country or from Latin America so that when they start working the assimilation and acculturation be facilitated.

E. Ministries at all age levels of our Church are a vital part of this proposal, but in a special way with the youth. The very life of our churches depend on our faithful and careful attention and nurture of this untapped and unlimited source of talents and resources in our communities and neighborhoods. That is why we propose and encourage the participation of this Team Ministry in the organization and development of youth and childrens activities that will involve in a meaningful way our children and youth in the mainstream life of our Hispanic churches. Youth Directors have proven to be successful in addressing these needs. We would like to see full-time youth directors in Hispanic churches and where that is not feasible at least a part-time one. Another way this could be accomplished is by the strengthening of our Sunday Schools. This has been a priority within the United Methodist Church for the last few years but very little, if anything, has been intentionally done to supply the needs of the Hispanic churches. That is why we might need to produce resources or get them from wherever they could be found so to be able to accomplish what is needed in this area.

F. The ministry of many of our Hispanic churches can be enhanced by projects that will involve them in a more meaningful way, a more active way in the life of their communities. There are funds that could be used for that purpose, both at the local district and conference levels and also at the national level of our church. The lack of knowledge about these resources and their lack of training in preparing proposals make it very difficult to participate in the proposal writing necessary so to take advantage of them. That is the reason why we are

proposing that part of the time of this Team Ministry be devoted to educate and train about these resources and even get involved in proposal writing where necessary to insure that the most advantageous use of these resources is done.

G. A very strong and aggressive program to recruit clergy leadership for our Hispanic churches needs to be developed. This program will be multi-dimensional:

1) The recruitment from our existing bank of lay persons with appropriate gifts for ministry and the appointment of these persons as local pastors under the supervision and direct responsibility of an ordained Hispanic elder. This will help us make better use of the talents of these lay persons and also our ordained clergy. The Board of the Ordained Ministry will have to establish a new set of guidelines and salary requirements for these local pastors.

2) Recruitment of trained pastoral leadership from other parts of North and South America and the Caribbean that would be willing to get involved in ministering in our Conference. Promotion at all levels needs to happen in order for this program to be effective. It will be the task of the Team to use every opportunity at the national level to advance our own programs and to help in the identification of possible candidates that could be transferred in.

3) A strong and forceful promotion of the ordained ministry among the young people in local churches and the organization of a Hispanic clergy team that will encourage them, help and guide them through the process of college and seminary into the ordained ministry.

H. The churches in transition are very instrumental for the success of an ambitious program like this one. This Team will make its purpose to create awareness within the pastoral and lay leadership of these congregations so that they could start doing ministry in their own communities and neighborhoods in such a way that an enhancement of the overall ministry be the result and the taking over of a property by another ethnic group with the consequent resentment and demonstrations of racism that in the past have been the trademark of this process.

Whenever necessary and possible it should be encouraged that more than one group or congregation meet at the same location but a careful and intentional process of sharing facilities needs to be stipulated and stimulated. The Conference Board of Global Ministries guidelines provide for such a process to be followed.

1. As a result of a more active participation of Hispanic churches in the community and organization of base ecclesial communities and new churches, a new awareness of needs among Hispanics will arise and new programs of outreach and social agencies might need to be established that will enhance the overall ministry of Hispanic churches and that will cater to the needs of those groups. This ministry Team will be aware and involved in this process.

Other needs and ministries will arise in the process of doing ministry in this new way, so this list of Task and Responsibilities is by no means complete or exhaustive, so we know that other areas of ministry will need to be added to these and should appropriately be done.

In our search for a better way to do ministry with Hispanics we have been encouraged by many people and informed by our own culture, history and self-understanding. But lately we have been encouraged also by the words of our Bishop, Dr. Jack M. Tuell, who during a recent Hispanic Jurisdictional Consultation addressed the group in Spanish and said:

"We need to understand the felt needs of Hispanic People, and develop programs to fit those needs. While our basic task is proclaiming the gospel, the way we present it needs to be tailored to the needs of people where they are. We need to run risks. Rather than trying nothing because this protects us from failure, let us try five things in the hope that one or two may succeed. Let us try things we have never tried before."

These are very appropriate words for our times. Let us be courageous enough to act upon them.

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